

DISCOURSES

Upon several
Divine Subjects.

VIZ,

The Measure of Divine Love.

The Natural and Moral Vanity of Man.

That the Law is not made void through Faith.

The Origin and the Relief of all Trouble and
Uneasiness of Mind.

The Natural and Moral Union of the Soul with God.

The Honour due to Good Men, and the Crime
of treating them with Scorn and Contempt.

The several Ways whereby God Addresses himself
to Man.

V O L. III.

By JOHN NORRIS, M. A. Rector of
Bemerton near Sarum.

The EIGHTH EDITION.



L O N D O N:

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Divine Subjects.

VIZ

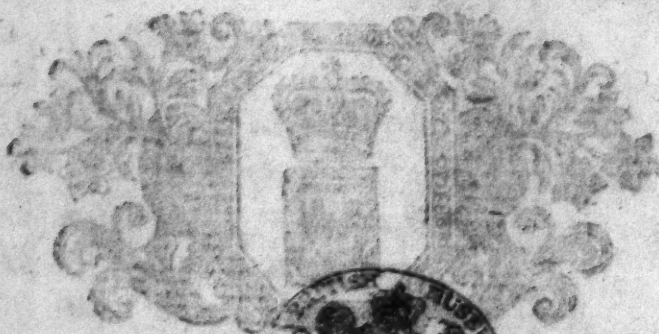
The Measure of Divine Love.
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Un easiness of Mind.
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of treating them with scorn and Contempt.
The several Ways whereby God afflicts himself
to Man.

Vol. I. III

By JOHN WORTON, M. A. Rector of

Barnet near London.

The Second Edition.



Printed for Edmund Curll, at the Bible and Crown
in Lombard Street.

To the Right Honourable THOMAS
Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Ba-
ron Herbert of Cardiff, Lord Privy-
Seal, &c. and one of their Majesties
most Honourable Privy-Council.

My Lord,

I Should not presume to make your Lordship a Pa-
tron to these Discourses, if your Lordship had
not been already pleased to make your self so to the
Author of them; and that in a manner so signal
and so beyond the ordinary measures of Generosity,
that I was thence encouraged to hope that the same
Goodness that obliged me to the most grateful Ac-
knowledgment, would also induce your Lordship to
accept of this first Opportunity I have of a publick
Expression of it.

The Discourses which I here venture to send abroad
under the Patronage of your Lordship's great Name,
were all composed in the Retirement which by your
Lordships peculiar Favour I now enjoy, which in-
deed does so naturally favour the Inclinations of a
Thoughtful Mind, and is so advantageously seated,
I may say Calculated for Contemplation, that per-
haps it has had some particular Influence upon these
Compositions, which it may be will be found a little
to favour of the Place of their Production, as Mens

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Dispositions are said to Symbolize with the Planet of their Nativity.

For this Reason I believe it has happened, that these Discourses run more upon a Philosophick Strain, than any other Compositions of mine do of this Nature and Character. And I am glad they do so; not only because they will afford a more suitable Entertainment to your Lordship's Contemplative and Philosophick Genius, (if a Person that has so much brighter Thoughts at command of his own, can be said to be Entertain'd by any thing that comes from so vulgar a Hand,) but also because I think we cannot do better Service to Religion, than by resolving the Practicall Duties of it into Principles of Philosophy, or make a better use of Philosophick Notions, than to employ them in the Service, and for the Interest of Religion.

How far these Ends are served in the Contents of the following Papers, every Reader has now some sort of Right to judge; but few I believe will be found in any Order or Class of Men so well qualified to do it as your Lordship, whose general insight into the whole Compass of Learning, and whose particular Excellency, even to nicety and exactness, in the more refined Theories of Philosophy, are so well known to the World, that they deservedly render you at once the Admiration and the Glory of a nice and inquisitive Age, which is so engaged in the view of your Personal Excellencies, that your Birth, Quality, and great Station make the least part of your Character; as the Eye is so fill'd and taken up with

The Epistle Dedicatory.

with the Luster of the Sun, as hardly to mind the Height of the Orb from whence it shines.

My Lord, I know not whether such Qualifications as these make you any whit the fitter for the Patronage of these Discourses, or of the Author of them, who may have too much reason to dread the Severity of such a Judge, and whose interest might have advised him to seek out for a less judicious Patron, one that was more of a Level with himself. But the great Obligations I am under to your Lordship above all other Men, make it my Duty to address my self and my (however mean) Performances to your Lordship, which I do with all that Reverential Deference which is owing to your Lordship's Quality and Personal Greatness, with all that Modesty and Concern that ought to accompany so defective a Present, and with all that Sense of Gratitude which becomes that singular Favour wherewith (to the Hazard of your own Judgment) your Lordship has been generously pleased lately to honour.

Your Lordship's

Very Humble,

Obedient and Obligated Servant;

J. NORRIS.

T O

T O T H E
R E A D E R.

YOU have here some of those Thoughts wherewith I entertain my Solitude, and which have help'd to fill up some of those looser Hours which hang upon a *Country-Life*; and which I think are thus much more accountably spent than in *beating* about after News, or holding tedious and impertinent Chat about State-Concerns. It is my serious and real Judgment that these Discourses both in regard of their Subjects and the manner wherein they are handled, may be fitted for publick Use and Service, and may contribute to improve both the Theory and the Practice of Religion; and for this Reason I am induced to Communicate them to the Publick. As for any Honour or Reputation that may happen to redound to my self by them, as I hope it was not my governing motive in this Undertaking, so do I desire to renounce and disclaim it, partly as a thing that is not my *Due*, (for what pretence can a *Creature* and a *Sinner* have to any such thing as *Glory*?) and partly as too vain and too empty a Good for a Rational Spirit to take up with, especially having so many greater things to imploy both his Thoughts and his Desires upon,

To the READER:

upon, having a *God* and a *Conscience* to whom he may study to approve, and with those *well done* he may without any great Self-denial, content himself. If therefore my good Reader, you happen to find here any new Notion discover'd, or any useful and important Truth clear'd, or any Duty of Religion rationally accounted for, or affectionately and advantageously recommended; if in short, you find either your Head inlightned, or your Heart warmed and put into a quicker *Motion* by any thing offer'd to your Consideration in these Discourses, bestow not your Praises or Commendations upon the Author of them, who would not deserve them if he desired them, or dared to take them; but rather joyn with him in ascribing all the Glory to the great Teacher and Instructor of Mankind, to him who shines upon all our Minds with the Beams of his Divine Light, and informs us (even while we think we instruct one another) in the secret recesses of our Reason; to him who is the Substantial Wisdom of the Eternal Father, and the Light of all his Creatures, in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, and who is the *true Light that enlightens* both you and me, and *every Man that comes into the World*; whose is the Kingdom and the Power, and to whom be the Glory. Amen.

upon, having a God and a Conscience to witness to whom he
may freely improve, and with those who have
he may without any great self-denial, content

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*A Discourse concerning the Measure
of Divine Love, with the Natural
and Moral Grounds upon which it
stands.*

M A T. 22. 37.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

A Very just and reasonable, but sure, one would think, a very needless Injunction. For need any Power or Faculty be under any other Law, than that of its own Nature, to delight in its proper Object? Does the Sense want a Precept to be pleased with sensible Good? Need we address our selves to the Eye to persuade it to love Light, or take pains to exhort the Ear to delight in harmonious Sounds? No, the Order of Nature does here supersede all other Methods of Engagement, and why then should there be need of any Command to a *Rational* Soul to love God? Does not an intelligible Good bear the same proportion to a reasonable Nature, as a sensible Good does to Sense; and is not God the same to the Soul, as Musick is to the Ear, or as

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Light

Light to the Eye? Yes certainly, and infinitely more: For these things, tho' they are the *proper* Goods of their respective Powers, yet they are not wholly commensurate, and fully adjusted to their Capacities; whence it is that *the Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing*. But now God is not only the proper Good of the Soul (as Light is of the Eye) but is withal a Good so transcendently excellent as to be able to fill the whole Capacity of its intellectual Powers. The Good of *his* sublime Nature is more than commensurate to the most stretch't Appetite of *ours*; nay, were our Capacity infinite, he would be sufficient to fill it; for he fills his own, and is infinitely happy in himself. And what need then of a Command to a rational Creature to love its proper Good, and a Good so infinitely lovely?

But for satisfaction to this, 'tis to be consider'd, first, that as in *Geometry* some plain and obvious Propositions are laid down, not so much for the sake of their own Discovery, as in order to further Theory, which, as a Superstructure is to be rais'd upon those Foundations; so in *Morality* and Divinity some practical Propositions or Precepts, tho' in themselves never so clear and evident, must yet be set down, if 'twere only for the sake of Method and Order, and to lay a Bottom for what is to be further built upon those Principles. And accordingly the Love of God being the fundamental Principle of all natural Religion and Virtue, or (as our Lord here terms it) the *first and great Commandment*, upon which all the Duties

Duties of the first Table do immediately, and those of the second remotely depend, it was very requisite that there should be an express Precept concerning it, tho' it be never so *evident* that we *ought* to love God, and withal never so *necessary* and unavoidable that we *should*.

Besides, 'tis also secondly to be consider'd, that what does here more principally and more directly fall under the Precept, is not the *Act* of loving God in general, but the special *degree* and manner of that Act, that it be with the whole Power and full Capacity of the Man. Now tho' it be of it self so plain and evident that God is to be loved, and withal so natural and necessary, that we should love him in some degree or other, yet neither is it so plain nor so necessary that we should love him up to the degree here *specifi'd*, with the whole Weight and Stress of our Love. This is not a Proposition of so bright an evidence as to shine forth by its own Light, but requires a Train of Argument and Consequence to make it appear reasonable, and must be proved in a way of Science and Demonstration. It was indeed below the Dignity and Majesty of the Supreme Law-giver to do that, but therefore it was the more necessary for him to use his Authority, to make it matter of express Precept, and to lay it as an eternal Law upon every rational Spirit that comes into being, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

The great Difficulty of this great Commandment, next to the *Practising* of it, is how to *Understand* it ; and therefore I shall first of all inquire into the true Sense and Import of it, and then into the Reason and Bottom upon which it stands.

As to the *Sense*, I think the highest that is generally put upon these Words amounts to no more than this, That God is to be the prime and principle Object of our Love and Delight ; That we are to love him in a *Superlative* way, above all other things whatsoever, so as to lose any Good, or suffer any Evil rather than commit the least Sin against him ; That we are always to prefer him in our Love, chusing to obey him rather than Man, and to please him rather than satisfy our own Will, and to enjoy him rather than any worldly or carnal Pleasure, saying with the Psalmist, *Thy Loving-kindness is better than Life*, and with the Church in the *Canticles*, *Thy Love is better than Wine*.

And if our Love be thus order'd, if we stand thus affected towards God, we are then allowed according to the common Opinion to love *Creatures*, to delight and solace our selves in them, to unite our Souls in some measure to them, and to reckon them among the props and stays of our life, and as the Ingredients of its present Happiness. Nor is there any harm presumed in all this, still provided that God be uppermost in our Hearts, have the largest share in our Affections, and be seated upon the *Throne* of the Soul, who though
per-

permitted to love other things, is yet to look upon God as her greatest Good, and accordingly to reserve her brightest and purest flame for his Altar; to love him with the choice, with the flower of her Affection, and be ready to part with any other Good when it once comes in competition with the Love of God.

In this I think I speak the sense of the common Interpreters, who for want of a suitable Foundation could not well carry the Building higher, but were forced to take up with an Explication far below the express Letter of the Text, and to make this to be all that was signified by loving God with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind, that we love him chiefly and principally, *best* and *most*. Sure they could not but be sensible that herein they did not rise up to the Letter of the Text, which manifestly requires a more elevated sense: But they could not advance higher without Building in the Air; and were therefore forced to cramp the sense of this great Commandment, and to put such a Construction upon it, not as the express Words of it require, but as their Hypothesis would bear.

I say as their Hypothesis would bear; for the Hypothesis these Men go upon, seems to be this; They suppose that other things besides God are truly and properly the Goods of the Soul, and contribute as efficient Causes to its happiness: That sensible Objects contain in themselves somewhat answerable to what we feel by their Occasion, and are withal the proper Causes of such

our Sensations : That the Bodies that surround us do really act in and upon us, not only by making impression upon our *Bodies*, and striking upon our *Organs of Sense*, but also by raising and exciting, those Sensations our Spirits are conscious of, so as to be the true efficient Causes of our *Pleasure* and our *Pain* : That the Fire gives us that sentiment of Heat which we feel when we approach it : and, That Wine causes in us that pleasing Taste which we feel when we drink it : And the like.

Now I confess, if this *Hypothesis* be true, if sensible Objects do really act upon our Souls, and are the proper efficient Causes of those pleasing Sensations which we feel there, then 'twill necessarily follow, that a certain portion of my Love is due to these sensible Objects : for, if these Objects produce Pleasure in me, then they do me good, they perfect my Being, and render it more happy ; and if they do me good, then in their proportion they are my good ; and if they are in any degree my good, then they are so far lovely ; and if they are any way lovely, then so far they ought to be loved. But now, if some part of our Love be due to sensible Objects (as upon this *Hypothesis* it is) then 'tis impossible that God should have a right to *all* of it ; and consequently, to love him with all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, can signify no more than to love him principally and above all, to give him the *Preference* in our Love. I say the *Preference*, for it seems the Creatures put in for a share ; and
if

if they have a part, 'tis impossible that God should have the whole : they must then both go sharers in our Affection, and the only Priviledge which God can claim upon this *Hypothesis*, is, to have the *largest* share in our Love.

Whether this *Hypothesis* be true or no, shall be consider'd in its proper place ; in the mean while it may serve as a strong Presumption, that it is not, that the Explication which is founded upon it falls so very short of the literal Emphasis of the Text, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* But it is to love God at this rate, to love him only principally and more than any thing else ? Does this exhaust the sense of this great Commandment ? Can he be said with any tolerable Sense to love God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind, that only loves him above other things, at the same time allowing other things a share in his Love ? Can he be said to love God with all his Love, that loves him only with a *Part* ? What though that part be the larger Part, 'tis but a Part still ; and is a *Part* the *Whole* ? What Logick, or what Grammar, will endure this ?

I think it therefore very evident, that the words of this great Law do call for a higher sense. And what can *that* be short of this (which indeed is what in ordinary construction they import) that we ought to love God not only with the Best and Most, but with the Whole of our Affection ; that we love him *intirely*, not only with an

integrity of Parts, but with an integrity of Degrees; that we love him not only with every Capacity, Passion, and Faculty, with the Understanding suppose; Will and Affections (here expressed by *Heart, Soul, and Mind*) but in every degree of every Power, with all the Latitude of our Will, and with the whole Possibility of our Souls; that we bestow on him not only the highest degree of our Love, but every degree of it, the *Whole*? In one Word, that God be not only the principal, but the only Object of our Love. This indeed is a Sacrifice worthy of a God, when the Whole Man is offer'd up to him as a Burnt Offering: And no less can he be supposed to require from us by virtue of this great Law, when he bids us to love him with all our Heart, with all our Soul, and with all our Mind, In the same Sense therefore as 'tis said, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; so is this great Commandment to be understood, as if it were said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou desire*. For Love is the true natural Worship of the Soul, and as we are to *Worship* none but God, so are we to *Love* none but God.

But to make this appear *intelligible Divinity*, we must look about for a proper Ground for it in *Philosophy*, it being necessary that we lay our Foundation as much deeper than the Common Interpreters have done, as we intend to build higher. Which leads me to the second general Part of my Undertaking; namely, to consider the Reason
and

and Bottom upon which this great Commandment stands.

The Sense of it I have already explain'd, and made to be the same with what the *Letter* of the Text imports; namely, That our whole Affection be placed upon God, and that we love him so intirely as to love none but him. I come now to justify this Sense, which I shall endeavour to establish upon this double Basis in general.

I. That God is the only Author or Cause of our Love.

II. That he is also the only proper Object of it.

First, I consider that God is the only Author or Cause of our Love. By Love here I understand that original Weight, Bent or Endeavour whereby the Soul of Man stands inclined, and is moved forwards to Good in general or *Happiness*. Now that this Impression is from God, and that 'tis he alone that has put this *Bias* into our Natures, I think demonstrable several ways; but at present shall only consider that this Motion of the Soul is a necessary Adherent to our Beings, such as we were never without, and such as we can never put off; such as is all over invincible and irresistible. The Soul of Man must not pretend to the least degree of Liberty here (for indeed it being impossible that our Love to Good in general should be bad, it was not fit it should be free) but is altogether passive in this Motion, and moves no otherwise than as she is moved. She has no more Command over this Motion than she has over the Motion of the *Heart* or *Pulse*, which shews it to be

be equally *Vital* and *Natural*, and of the very essential Make and Constitution of our Being. Well then, I demand, Is this natural necessary Motion from our *Selves* or from *God*? If from our *Selves*, How comes it then to pass, that we cannot command it, or stop it? Had we Power to produce what we have not Power to govern? or, is it more difficult to govern than to produce? No certainly, were we the Authors of this Motion we should have some Power over it, and be able to manage and controul it; which since we cannot do, we may well conclude, that 'tis not a thing of our Production; and that though it be *in us*, yet 'tis not *of* or *from* our *Selves*. And whence then must it be but from *God*? Who else could kindle in our Natures such an unquenchable Flame? Who else could fix such a strong *Spring* in our Souls, and actuate our Beings with such a mighty Energy? And who should be the Author of what is *Natural* and Necessary in us, but he that is the Author of our *Natures*? Love is the same in the Moral and Intellectual World as Motion is in the Natural; and as we make *God* to be the Author of Natural Motion, so there is as much reason to make him the Author of our Love. But now if *God* be the only Author and Cause of our Love, has not he then the sole Right and Title to it; and has not he also a Right to it all? This may seem perhaps at first glance to be a captious and surprizing way of Arguing; but consider it well; Has not *God* a Right to all that he produces? What is it that gives him a Right

Right to the whole World, but his Production of it? Why has God a Right to me, but because I am his Creature? Upon what Account has he a Right to all my Powers and Faculties, and to all the service of them, but because he produces them, and sustains them; because *in him we live, move, and have our Being*? But now if God does as much produce my *Love* as he does my *Being*, then, Why has he not as much Right to my *Love* as to any other part of my Nature? And if God only has a Right to my *Love*, and a Right to it all, as having produced it all, then 'tis evident, that all of it ought to be fix'd upon him, and that he has great Injury and Injustice done him whenever any the least degree of it goes beside him. Indeed were there any part or degree of our *Love* which God did not produce, That we might give away from him, That we might bestow upon a Creature; but if God be the Author of it all, if there be not one degree of our *Love* but what he produces, 'tis highly just and reasonable that he should have it all; and we cannot let the least Spark of this sacred Fire light upon the Creature without so far defrauding the Creator.

Especially if we consider further the Manner how, and the End for which God produces our *Love*. I now suppose, as a thing already proved, that all the Motion that the Soul has towards Good comes from God; but how does God move us towards Good? Whither is it that God does then direct this Motion? He himself indeed is the *Author* of it, but what is the *Term* of it? to what does

does God move us? Our corrupt Imagination may perhaps be ready here to suggest that God moves us to Good by moving us towards the *Creature*. But stay, Would such a *Term* of this Motion be worthy of its *Cause*? Can God move us towards the *Creature*? Can he move us from himself? Can he act for a *Creature*? Can he make the *Creature* his End? Does not God make all things for himself? Does he not always act for himself? Is he not always his own End? Has not this the Evidence of a First Principle, That God acts only for himself? We must therefore of necessity conclude, That as God is the Author of this Motion, so he is the Natural End and Term of it too; and that he moves us to Good no otherwise, than by moving us towards himself. We must conclude, that God is the true great *Magnet* of our Souls; that he continually draws and moves them, not from, but to himself, as being both *their*, and his *own* great End. We must conclude that God intended himself as the sole Object of the Love which he produced; that he has impress'd a Motion upon our Intellectual Heart, only to incline it toward himself; and that as the whole Motion of our Love is from God, so it has no other Term than God in the Order and Institution of Nature.

Well then, if the Case be thus, if God moves us to Good by moving us towards himself: Is it not then a transgressing this Order and Institution of Nature? Is it not an abuse of that Motion of Love which God causes in us, and which he directs

rects towards himself, to bestow any part of it upon a Creature, to love any thing besides God? Do we not then cross the Order of Nature, and resist the Will of its great Author? Do we not then hinder his Act, and put a Bar to his Motion within us? Nay, do we not then act against the Constitution of our own Frame, and run counter to the great Bias of our Natures? What, does he that gave us our Beings, shew also so great a Concern for their *Perfection*, as to impress upon them a continual Motion towards himself; and shall we be so ungrateful as well as unjust, as to stop short, and take up with a Creature? We ought certainly to follow the Order, and conform to the Will of God; and since he has order'd the Motion of our Love to no less Noble an End than himself, 'tis evident that thither only we ought to *direct*, and there only to *fix* our Love.

And that we do not at all strain the Sense of this Commandment, by supposing it thus to oblige us to love the Lord our God with *all the Heart, Soul and Mind*, in the strictest Emphasis of the Phrase, will yet further appear, if we examin the other general ground upon which it stands; and consider

Secondly, That as God is the only Author and Cause of our Love, so is he also the only proper Object of it. It is most clear and certain, that God only is to be loved, if God be the only proper Object of our Love; and 'tis as clear, that he is the only proper Object of our Love, if he only be our Good; and 'tis as clear that he only

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is our Good, if he only does us Good, if he only perfects and betters our Beings ; and 'tis as clear that he only does so, if he be the only true Cause of all our Pleasure, of all those grateful Sensations whereof we are conscious, and wherewith we are affected. I say if he be : But here lies the Point to be debated. And 'tis a great Point indeed ; for upon this Hinge the whole Weight of the present Theory turns, and the whole Issue of it will depend. Here therefore let us stop and fix, and with all possible heed and attentiveness enquire after the true Cause of our *Pleasure*. For where ever we find that, there to be sure we shall also find the only proper Object of our *Love*.

That in the use of Bodies, and in converging with Sensible Objects, we find Pleasure, we learn by *Experience*, but whence this Pleasure comes, and what is its true efficient Cause, 'tis our *Reason* only that can inform us. And yet she has had the ill Fortune to be least of all consulted in this matter. It is generally thought, that the Pleasure we feel in the Use, and by the Intervention of Bodies is caused in us by the Bodies themselves. That the Fire for instance, produces in us Sensation of Warmth, that the Sun produces in us the Sensation of Light, that the Fruits of the Earth communicate to us the Sensations of the pleasant Tastes, and the like. These Bodies are first supposed to have something like these Sensations in themselves, and then to produce them in us. Thus Fire is supposed to be endued with the quality of Heat in it self, and then to impart this

this *quality* to us; to be first Hot in its own Nature, and then to make us so. This has been all along the Current unquestion'd Apprehension, not only of the Vulgar who think in haste, and determin of things only as they appear to Sense, but of the more inquisitive and reasoning part of Mankind. And though some of the Modern *Reformers* of Philosophy have thought fit to reject the *former* part of the Supposition, *viz.* That Bodies have in themselves something answerable to the Sensations which we feel in the use of them; yet they generally retain the *Later*, *viz.* That they produce and cause those Sensations in us, and do accordingly allow, that Fire (for instance) is *Eminently* and *Potentially*, though not *Formally* hot, that is, That though it has not any thing resembling the Sensation of Heat in it self, yet it has a Power to produce such a Sensation in those that shall approach it. This they not only *allow*, but *contend* for. For whereas according to the Old Distinction, some things were said to be both *Formally* and *Eminently* hot too (as Fire) and some only *eminently*, (as the Sun) the Moderns have ventured to cut off the former part of the Distinction, and reduce all to the later, by supposing all Bodies that we call Hot, to be so only *Eminently* and *Potentially*, as they are productive of Heat in us. And by this they explain the *Phænomenon* of Heat in Bodies, supposing it to be nothing else in the Bodies themselves, but only a Power of producing such a Sensation. But then by this they manifestly hold that they do
pro-

* Mr. Malebranche.

produce it ; and I know but of
* One amongst them that thinks
any *Otherwise*, or any *Farther*. They thought,
it seems, they had sufficiently reform'd from the
Vulgar Philosophy, by shaking off the former
part of their Hypothesis, That Bodies have in
themselves some inherent Quality analogous to
our Sensations ; so much they saw must be reject-
ed. But they could not tell how to deny the
later part, and do therefore hold, that Bodies do
produce in us such and such Sensations, though
they have nothing of a *Similar Nature* with them
in themselves.

Very good. But were they determin'd to this
Persuasion by the Moments of Reason ? I think
'tis to be doubted whether they ever so much as
Consulted her in *this* part of the Question. They
seem here rather to have hearkned to the Illusions
of Sense and Imagination, suggesting to them,
that because such Bodily impressions are accom-
panied with such Sensations, therefore the later
were the effect of the former. This is the only
reason that is, or can be pretended in behalf of
this Common Presumption. But is this a War-
rantable Conclusion ? Does it follow, that because
such Sensations do accompany such Bodily Im-
pressions, that therefore those Bodily Impressions
are the Cause of those Sensations ? Can we argue
from the *Concomitancy* of one thing with another,
to the *Causal Dependance* of one thing upon ano-
ther ? 'Tis certain that we cannot ; and 'tis there-
fore as certain, that the Reason pretended for the
common

common Hypothesis, is indeed no Reason at all, but a *Prejudice* rather than a *Reason*.

Now though it be very unworthy of a Philosopher, and withall a very great let and intanglement to him in his Enquiry after Truth, to assert any one thing without clear and full Evidence: Yet this is neither the only, nor the greatest defect of this Conclusion. For as there is no sufficient Reason for it, so there is plain incontestable Reason against it.

Had our late Improvers of Science disregarded the importunate Clamours of Sense and Imagination in this later point as they did in the former, and consulted only the Responses of *inward Truth*, they would have seen as much reason to reject the Notion of Bodies being able to excite Sensations in us, as to reject that of their having some certain *Qualities* like those Sensations in themselves. Nay, they would have seen, that the very same Reasons that induced them to the one, ought also to have determin'd them to the other. For why is it that they will not allow that Bodies have in them something like our Sensations, particularly that in Fire there is any such thing as a Quality of Heat, answerable to what we call Heat in our selves: I say, Why is it that they will not allow this, but because they reason'd with themselves to this effect: There is nothing conceivable in Bodies but *Magnitude, Figure, and Motion*: For instance, There is nothing in Fire but certain Particles of Matter so and so sized, so and so figured, and so and so moved. Examine

your Idea of Fire a thousand times over, and this is all you will ever be able to find in it. I say, find *in* it : For 'tis true indeed, when you come near you find something more *from* it, you find withall a Sensation of *Heat*, either pleasing or painful according as your distance is. But you have no more reason thence to conclude, that there is such a Quality as Heat, resembling what you feel, in the Fire, than you have to conclude *Pain* to be in a *Needle* or a *Thorn*. When you approach the Fire you feel Heat, and when you prick your Hand with a Needle you feel Pain ; but as you *do* not therefore fancy any such thing as Pain to be in the Needle, so neither *ought* you to suppose any such thing as Heat to be in the Fire. That indeed which makes Men more apt to do so in this Case than in the other is, because the Particles of the Fire are too minute to be discern'd by the Eye, and so Men not perceiving the *Mechanicalness* of its Operation, are apt to have recourse to some inherent *Quality* ; whereas the Thorn and Needle are of a visible bulk, and we see how they pierce and wound our Flesh. But did Men as clearly see the Particles of the Fire, with their Size, Figure and Motion, and with what a Spring they are shot and darted forth upon us, and how like so many fine Needles or Launces they enter and divide the parts of our Body, they would no more Dream of any such thing as *Heat* in the *Fire*, than they do of *Pain* in a *Needle*, and would think it every whit as odd and improper to say, Fire is *Hot*, as to say a Needle

Needle is *Painful*. And tho' as the Case now stands, they are apt to fancy the contrary; yet 'tis plain, that this is only an Illusion of Sense, Reason in the mean while constantly assuring us, that there can be nothing in Fire but Particles of Matter of such a Size and Shape, and in such a degree of Motion: And withall, that we cannot ascribe such a thing as Heat to the Fire, answerable to that Sensation in our selves, without ascribing to it also *Thought* and *Perception* at the same time, which would be of intolerable Consequence.

Upon these and such like Considerations, the Reformers of Philosophy, I presume, thought it necessary to reject the former part of the Vulgar Hypothesis, that Bodies have in them some certain Qualities answerable to our Sensations. And no doubt but that they reason'd upon clear and distinct Idea's. But will not the very same Considerations be of equal force to disprove the later part too, that Bodies do *cause* and *produce* Sensations in us? For if there be nothing in Bodies but *Motion* and *Figure*, if they are capable of no other Modification, then whatever they do, they must do it by the Motion, and by the Figure of their Parts; there being nothing besides supposed to be in them. If therefore they cause our Sensations, 'tis by their Figure and their Motion that they must do it. But can Motion or Figure produce a Sensation, a Sentiment of the Mind, a *Thought*? 'Tis hard, extreme hard, to conceive how one Motion should beget another. But can it produce an Effect more Noble and Excellent,

and of an Order so very much higher than it self? Can it produce a Thought? Is there any Proportion between such a Cause and such an Effect; between Motion and Thinking, between an Affection of a Body, and a Sentiment of the Soul? Or is there any proportion between such a *particular* Motion, and such a *particular* Sensation; between that Motion, suppose, that is follow'd with Pleasure, and Pleasure; or between that Motion which is follow'd with Pain, and Pain? Is that Motion which *de facto* is accompanied with Pleasure, more apt of its self and in its own Nature, to produce that Sensation rather than Pain? Or may not that very Motion which is *de facto* follow'd with Pleasure, be as well the Occasion of Pain for any Proportion, Affinity, or Natural Connexion that is in the things themselves? 'Tis most certain that it may. For Pleasure and Pain are Sensations of a wholly different, nay contrary kind. They differ as much as any two things can do. They differ not only Essentially, but as Contraries, as extreme Opposites. And they do almost make their *Subjects* do so, the Soul that is in Pleasure differing almost *Specifically* from her self when she is in Pain. But now there is not the like difference between the respective Motions supposed to produce them; They differ only Accidentally and Gradually. That Motion of the Fire which occasions Pleasure, differs only in Degree from that which occasions Pain. Whence it is evident, that these Causes are not in themselves equivalent to their Effects,

Effects, nor have any Natural Relation to them, but are indifferent to either, as being disproportionate to both. That the same Motion that is now attended with Pleasure, might as well (for any particularity in the thing it self) be attended with Pain, there being as great disproportion between these particular Motions and their particular Sensations, as between Motion and Sensation in general.

What is here said of *Motion*, Is as applicable to *Figure*; and since these are the only two Modifications Body is capable of, and these hold no proportion with our Sensations, 'tis plain that our Sensations ought not, cannot be ascribed to Bodies as their proper Efficient Causes. The sum of the Argument resolves into this. There is nothing in Bodies but Figure and Motion, if therefore Bodies do produce or cause our Sensations, they must do it by Figure and Motion. But they cannot do it by Figure and Motion; therefore Bodies cannot produce our Sensations.

And whereas it is again further concluded, that Bodies have not in themselves any Quality resembling the Sensations which we feel at their Presence, because this would oblige us to allow them capable of *Thought*; which in Reason we cannot do: Is not the very same Consideration of equal force to prove also, that they do not produce our Sensations? Does not the same Want and Incapacity of Thought infer the one as well as the other? Bodies have no Thought, therefore they have no Sensations; Bodies have no Thought, therefore

therefore they *produce* none : Is not the last Consequence as good as the first ? Without all question it is. For how can a Thoughtless Principle produce a Thought ? That is, how can the Effect be above the Order of its Cause ? If it may, then any thing may produce any thing, and any thing may follow from any thing, which would overturn all the Order both of *Science* and of *Nature*.

And if further, it be reckon'd such an Absurdity that *Matter* should *Think* (as it is by those who to avoid this inconvenience, deny that there is any thing in Bodies resembling our Sensations) then is it not a much greater absurdity to suppose it capable of *producing* Thought ? And are not those very inconsistent with their own Principles, who scruple to allow to Bodies a Capacity of Thinking, and upon that ground reject the Old Doctrin of *Qualities*, as they signifie something in Bodies corresponding to our Sensations ; and yet at the same time will allow them a Power of producing that Thought in us which they think they are not capable of in themselves ? Is not this a very great inconsistency, especially for Men of Principles and Demonstration to be guilty of ? For certainly it is a great deal more to be able to *produce* Thought, than to be merely *capable* of it. I my self am capable of Thought, but I do not find I have a Power to produce it, not so much as in my self, much less in another. If therefore we deny Matter what is Less, we ought to be the more Cautious how we allow it what is Greater ; and if it be such an Absurdity that
Bodies

Bodies should be capable of Thought, then much more absurd is it, that they should have a Power to produce it.

And thus have I shewn that the very same Reasons which prove that Bodies have not any Qualities in them like our Sensations, do also prove that they do neither produce Sensations in us, and consequently that our Modern Philosophers who upon those Grounds rejected the former part, ought upon the very same Grounds to have rejected the latter too. And as they ought, so they easily might. They had the right Thread in their Hands, but 'twas their Unhappiness to let it go, and not to pursue the Clue of their own Reasonings.

What I have hitherto argued from the *Principles* upon which those Men built their Conclusion, may also be as well argued from the *Conclusion* it self built upon those Principles. Their Conclusion is, that Bodies have not in themselves any such inherent Qualities as correspond to our Sensations. Well then, if they have not any thing like Sensation in themselves, how shall they be able to produce them in us? Can they communicate what they are not possess of? Can they cause Sensations in us which they have not, which they feel not, which they know not, and which they cannot ever cause in themselves? They themselves are here supposed utterly void and uncapable of all Sensation; but if they can produce it in us, why may they not be as well able to produce it in themselves? But this must not

be ; the *Conclusion* is, that they have not any thing like those Sensations in themselves ; whence I may justly infer, that they are as little capable of producing them in us.

But besides, Can Bodies act upon Spirits ? So indeed they must do, if it be true that they produce our Sensations, since the Soul is the only proper Subject of all Perception. But is this possible ? Is not Spirit supposed to *penetrate* Body ? Well, if so, then it may coexist with it in the same determinate point of Space ; if so, then it will not resist it, and if so, then it will not be capable of suffering by it, or receiving any impression from it, it being impossible that Bodies should act upon that which does not resist their Action. The less the resistance is, the less always is the Impression (as appears from that little force the strongest Wind has upon a Body of a *Conical* Figure) and consequently where there is no resistance at all, there can be no Impression at all. And therefore since Spirits make no resistance against Bodies, it is not possible that Bodies should have any Action, or make any Impression upon Spirits. The most that can be allow'd to Bodies, is to be able to act upon other Bodies, either by moving all their parts at once out of their place, or by changing the Order and Situation of the Parts among themselves ; but how they should be capable of acting upon Spirits, upon a sort of Beings that make no resistance against them, is what I can neither Conceive, or think Conceivable.

Suppose

Suppose I should fling a Stone at a Spirit; should I hurt it, do you think? No you'll say, not a *mere* Spirit; but should that Spirit be in a *Body*, you would hurt it then. But pray why so? What's the meaning of this? Why if it were in a *Body*? If the Stone cannot hurt it when there is nothing that interposes, it will be less able to do so when there is so thick a Wall between. But if it be the Stone that properly hurts it when 'tis in the *Body*, then why can it not as well do it when 'tis out of the *Body*? It should by right be better able then, as I can more easily wound a naked Man, than a Man clad in Armour. But this plainly discovers the bottom of the Mystery; this clearly shews, that 'tis not the Stone that strictly and properly speaking, *causes* the Sensation of Pain in the Spirit (for then it would be as well, nay better able to hurt a *separate* Spirit than an *imbody'd* one) but that all that the Stone truly does is only to administer the *Occasion* of this Sensation to the Spirit by what it impresses upon its *Body*, but that some other Being is the true Efficient *Cause* of it; of which further by and by.

In the mean while I further consider that if *Bodies* should be allow'd to be the proper Causes of our Sensations, of that Pleasure and that Pain which we feel at their Presence and in their Use, then it would be in the power of *Bodies* to make us happy or miserable, to reward or punish us, to perfect or to deteriorate our Condition; our well or ill being would depend upon them; consequently they would be *above* us, so far above us
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as to be the true and proper Good, and the true and proper Evil of Man, and so would justly deserve not only our Love and our Fear, our Gratitude and our Esteem, but even our very Devotion and Veneration. We ought then to ascribe our Good to the Bodies that surround us as well as to our *Own*, pay a Tribute of Praise to the Material World, and sing a *Te Deum* to the Creation. We ought then to worship the Sun for giving us Light, the Fire for affording us Heat, the Fruits of the Earth for delighting us with their pleasing Tasts, and what not? There would be no part of the Material World so vile and mean (not even the very Earth we tread upon) but what upon this Supposition would be above our selves, and upon which we should depend for our Happiness and our Misery, and would therefore challenge a share in our Religious Acknowledgments. These are most intolerable Consequences, but such as do inevitably follow upon the supposition of making Bodies the Causes of those Sensations which accompany the Presence and Use of them, and therefore I think it necessary to deny (however I may encounter the Prejudice of Imagination in so doing) that they are the true and proper Causes of those Sensations.

But to strike a little more light yet into this Matter, let us consider the Operation of some particular Body. I finding my self cold, draw near to the *Fire*, that is, to a Body consisting of a great Number of very small Minute Particles, of sharp-pointed Figures, variously agitated, and
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in a most rapid and impetuous Motion. Upon my Approach I find my troublesome Sensation of Cold to abate, and by degrees to be exchanged for a more grateful one, which we call Heat. This is the Effect that I experiment upon my coming near the Fire. But pray what does the Fire do to me? Why to speak properly it does nothing to *me*, that is, to my *Spirit*. But what is it that it does to my *Body*? Why it variously moves and agitates the Parts of it, and if near enough will divide and separate one Part from another, and so dissolve my Bodily Frame. This Fire does, and this is *all* it does, or can do directly and properly as an *Efficient Cause*. Well, but tho' this be all that Fire *does*, yet this is not all that is *done*, I feel something more at my Approach to it. Yes, you'll say I feel the Impression which the Fire makes upon my Body. No, that's your mistake, I do not feel the *Impression* made upon my Body (for how can I feel what is done to another thing?) but I feel a certain *Sensation* in my Soul either of Pleasure or Pain, between which and that Bodily Impression there is no manner of Similitude or Proportion. The *Sensation* is that which I *feel*. But that is not what the *Fire does*, whose whole Efficiency being only Motion and Figure can have Effect no further than upon my Body. But the Sensation, which I feel is not in my Body, but in my Soul, and consequently is not of the Fire's producing, but must be ascribed to some other Cause. In short, that which moves the Parts of my Body is one thing, and that
which

which affects my Soul with Pleasure or Pain is another; the Fire may do the *Former*, but it cannot do the *Later*.

But though the Fire cannot directly and immediately operate upon the Soul so as to affect it with any Sensation, yet may it not mediately and indirectly by Virtue of that *Union* that is between *Soul* and *Body*? So indeed it is commonly thought, and many a Learned Man has sat down with this answer as with a very full and satisfactory Account of the business. There is they say a very close Tie and Union between the *Soul* and *Body*, and by this means Fire comes to operate upon the Soul, and to give it Pleasure or Pain, and all by Virtue of this Union. But for Fire to operate upon the Soul by reason of the *Union* between that and the *Body* is such a loose indeterminate way of speaking, that as it clears nothing, so 'tis neither capable of having any Answer applied to it, till it be drawn out of its Ambiguity, and reduced to some certain Meaning. I suppose therefore that they who offer this Account, if they intend any thing certain and distinct by it, must mean one of these three things.

Either that the Fire by the Motion which it imparts to my *Body* makes it to act upon my Soul.

Or, that there is such a mutual Connexion or *Natural Sympathy* between these two Substances Soul and *Body*, that what is done to the *Body* will be felt by the Soul.

Or lastly, that there is such a *Positive Law* or Order establish'd between them by the Author

of Nature, that such Impressions made upon the *Body* shall be ordinarily followed by such Sensations in the Soul.

As for the first of these ways which supposes the Fire by the Motion which it communicates to my *Body* to make my *Body* to act upon my Soul, this will resolve into an immediate Action of *Body* upon Spirit, which has been confuted already. For though the Fire be here supposed to act *mediately*, yet my *Body* is supposed to act *immediately* upon my Soul. But now it is no more possible that my *Body* should act upon my Soul, than that any *other Body* should. And the same Reasons that prove it impossible that *Body* in general should be able to act upon Spirit, prove it also impossible that any particular Bodies should.

As to the Second, which supposes such a natural connexion and sympathy between these Two Substances Soul and *Body*, that what is done to the *Body* will be felt by the Soul, I deny that there is or can be any such connexion in the nature of the things themselves ; for (not to argue at present from the vast disproportion between *Body* and Spirit) are not the Soul and *Body* *Two distinct* Substances ? And can any Two things that are really distinct one from the other, be so united or connected together in their own natures, that an impression made upon the one, shall by the same act affect the other ? Is there any such natural connexion between *Body* and *Body*, or Spirit and Spirit ? much less then between *Body* and Spirit. Do the Figures which
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are cut upon the bark of a Tree wound my *Body*? Or does the pain or grief which another Soul endures by way of natural connexion, affect mine? Is *another's Pain mine*? I may indeed make it my own in a moral sense, by interressing my self in it, but then 'tis not another's Pain that I endure (unless figuratively speaking) but my own. There is no natural sympathy between my Spirit and any other Spirit in the World, nor am I concerned in any change that is wrought in it, whether for Happiness or Misery, any further than I please to concern my self. Much less then can any Impression made upon my Body by way of *Natural Sympathy*, affect my Soul. Yes, but you'll say they are so intimately *united*, that the one partakes in the other's Sufferings. But if by *united*, you mean that there is any such Connexion or Dependance between them in the Nature of the things themselves, you beg the thing in Question, and which I shall never grant, *viz.* That Bodies and Spirits (or indeed any two Substances) are or can be so united, that one should feel the Impression made upon the other. But besides, that which I feel is not the *Impression* made upon my Body (as was observ'd before) but a *Sensation*, whether of Pleasure or of Pain; between which and the Impression, there is not the least shadow of likeness or proportion. 'Tis common indeed to say, *we feel such a Blow*, or *we feel such a Wound*, but this must not be allow'd but in a popular Latitude; for to speak strictly and Philosophically, 'tis not the *Blow* that we feel, but
Pain;

Pain; which being a Sensation of the Soul, is distinct from the Impression made upon the Body; and consequently the Soul cannot be said to feel what is done to the Body, (for it feels something else :) Nor can what is done to the Body, be the Cause of what the Soul feels.

By this it sufficiently appears, that the Fire cannot be truly said to operate upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the *Body* in either of the two former ways: If then they will have the Fire to operate upon the Soul by virtue of its Union with the *Body*, they must be supposed to intend it in the third and last sense of the expression; namely, that there is such a *positive* Law or Order establish'd between them by the Author of Nature, that such Impressions made upon the *Body*, shall be follow'd by such Sensations in the Soul: Now I acknowledge, that this is a right Notion of the Union that is between Soul and *Body*, as resolving it not into a *Natural*, but a *Positive* Connexion and Dependance, it being impossible that two really distinct Substances, such as *Body* and Soul are, should be united together any otherwise. But then I deny that the Fire can be truly said to act upon the Soul by virtue of such an Union as this. And to say that it does, is in effect to give up the Cause, by granting the very thing hitherto contended for. To say that the Fire *thus* acts upon the Soul is implicitly to confess that it does not truly act upon it at all, and to lead us directly to the proper Cause that *does*. For when you say that the Fire causes such a Sensation in the Soul

Soul by reason of that *Law*, that such Sensations shall follow such Impressions, (for this is what you are now supposed to understand by the *Union* of Soul and *Body*) 'tis plain that you ascribe the effect, not to the *Fire*, but to that *Law*, whatever it be. For if such a Sensation did naturally and directly follow such an Impression of the Fire as an Effect follows its proper Cause, then what need of any *Law* or *Order* to be establish'd, that such a Sensation should follow such an Impression? 'Tis plain therefore, that the Sensation produced in the Soul at the Impression of the Fire, is to be resolved into this *Law*, as its proper Cause, and can depend upon the Impression no otherwise, than as an *Occasion*, or a *Condition* determining the Efficiency of this *Law*. The Sensation indeed follows such an Impression, but because it only *therefore* follows it, because of that *Law* and *Order* establish'd that it should; 'tis the *Law*, not the *impression* of the Fire, that is the true Cause of the Sensation.

Well, but what is this *Law*? It must be something that executes it self, otherwise how shall it be secure of its effect? And what can that be, but the Will of God; and what is the Will of God, but God; who does all things by his Will, that is, by himself? So then according to this account 'tis *God* that is the true Efficient Cause of that Sensation, either of Pleasure or Pain which we feel at the impression of the Fire; and the Fire it self is so far from operating (as was supposed) upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the *Body*,

Body, that 'tis God that acts upon the Soul by the *Mediation* of the *Fire*, which only serves as a Condition or Occasion to determin the Act of God, the only true and proper Cause.

Is then the *Fire* to be consider'd only as bearing the part of a *Condition*, or an *Occasion* to the First Cause, does it *produce* or *effect* nothing? Yes, it may consider'd as a *Cause* too, with respect to the impression that is made upon the *Body*; but as to the Sensation which upon that impression arises in the *Soul*, we can allow it to be no more than a Condition or Occasion. The sum is, there are three things of distinct Consideration relating to the *Fire*, the Motion that is in the *Fire* it self, the Impression made upon my *Body* by that Motion, and the Sensation that follows in the *Soul* upon that Impression. As to the Motion that is in the *Fire* it self, therein consists its proper Power, Force and Activity: As to the Impression made upon my *Body*, that is the effect which it works by that Power; but as to the Sensation which follows in my *Soul* upon that Impression, this does no way depend upon the Impression of the *Fire* as its Efficient Cause, but is raised or produced in me by the Author of my Nature, by the occasion of that Impression, according to that general Law and Order he has establish'd, that such certain Sensations should follow upon such certain Impressions, as in the sequel I shall more directly shew.

I have hitherto shewn, both by General and by Particular Considerations, that *Bodies* are not

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the true proper Causes of our Sensations, of that Pleasure and that Pain, which by their intervention we feel, and which therefore they *seem*, and are generally *thought* to produce. And I have once or twice by way of Anticipation, glanc'd a little at the *True Cause* of all our Sensations, which I have intimated to proceed from the Author of our Natures. But this being not enough to Convince, I shall now attempt to offer some Rational Proof for the truth of what I have already but only *intimated* and *proposed*.

It will go a great way towards the Proof of this, that Bodies are not the true Causes of our Sensations, which is the reason that I have so largely and so nicely discours'd that Point. For they are the things to which Men are most apt to ascribe them, and that because they are the only things they see and have before them; and because withall, 'tis upon their Impression that our Sensations follow, whereupon by a kind of *Sensible Logick*, they are led to conclude that what they feel is really caused by them. And this hinders them from inquiring any *further* or any *higher*. But now were this Prejudice of Sense once removed, could Men once get over this Difficulty that their Sensations are not caused by Bodies, there would not be much Difficulty to persuade them that they are caused by *God*. And therefore having already given in such clear and full Evidence that Bodies do not cause our Sensations, I think the greatest part of the Work is done, and that we may now presume as a thing that

that will not be long a granting us, that God is the true and proper Cause of them.

But for a more Positive and particular Proof, I further consider, that since *Body* is not the Cause of our Sensations, the Cause of them must of necessity be *Spirit*, all that ~~is~~ being included under one of these two. Well, if Spirit, the Competition will be very narrow, for then it must be either our own Spirit, or some Angel, or Demon, or God. Not our own Spirit. For if my own Spirit were the Cause of those Sensations which I feel at the Impressions which other Bodies make upon mine, it would then be in my Power to have those Sensations as well without the Impressions of Bodies as with them. I might then have the Sensation of Light without the Impression of the Sun, and the Sensation of Heat without Fire, and the Sensation of sweet Odours and Tastes without the Mediation of odorifick or sapid Bodies. For since these Bodies are supposed according to the Principles before laid down not to have any Concurrence by way of *Efficiency* in the Production of those Sensations, but only to serve as positive Conditions to determin the Action of that Cause (whatever it is which does produce them) certainly it must be in the Power of that Cause to produce those Sensations without any such bodily Impressions, nay, though there were no such thing as Body in being. As he that made the Waters of *Marah* sweet by throwing in of a Tree, might if he had so pleas'd, as well have made them sweet without it. And

consequently were I my self *that* Cause, what should hinder me from raising the Sensations I now feel as well *without* as *with* those Impressions to which they are ordinarily annexed? But not finding in my self such a Power, I may reasonably conclude that my Soul is not the Author of her own Sensations, but that she is altogether *Passive* in them, and depends for the Production of them upon some other Cause.

And besides, if I my self were the Author of my own Sensations, then since I naturally and necessarily love *Pleasure*; and as naturally and necessarily hate *Pain*, I should never produce in my self the Sensation of Pain, but always the Sensation of Pleasure. And so would every one else in the World besides, they would be always in Pleasure and never in Pain, and then we should have a merry World indeed. But this is not our Case, we feel Pain as well as Pleasure, and we feel it always against our Wills, which is a plain Argument that what we feel in our selves is not produced by our selves; but that we are in intire subjection and dependance upon some other Being, in whose Power it is to make us Happy or Miserable.

Well then, if it be not our own Spirit that is the Cause of our Sensations, the whole Dispute will lie between some Angel, or Demon, or God. But this Competition will soon be ended, by considering the Qualification that will be requisite in that Cause which shall produce such an Effect as this. Besides that exact and thoroughly comprehensive

prehensive Knowledge that such a Being must have of our Natures, of our whole Animal and Intellectual Frame, and that Effectual Power he must also have to work upon them, which we can hardly ascribe to any other Being than him that made us, who seems only fitted both to understand and order his own Workmanship, I say besides this, he must also be supposed to know the very critical *Moment* when such and such Bodies make Impression upon ours, and he must also know critically the *Degree* of that Impression, and he must also know exactly the very instant when the Impression *ceases*. He must know the *Moment* of the Impression, that he may know when to produce the Sensation. He must know the *Degree* of the Impression, that he may know how to proportion the Sensation. And he must know exactly the *Moment* when the Impression ceases, that he may know when to stop and suspend his Operation, that so he may not continue the Sensation after the Impression is over. As for Example, that Being whoever he is that produces in me the Sensation of Heat as often as I draw near the Fire, must be supposed to know exactly when I do so, that he may know how to *time* that Sensation, and he must know the critical *Degree* of the Fire's Impression, that he may know how to *temper* and *proportion* that Sensation, that he may not *burn* me when by the Impression he should only *warm* me, and he must also know the very Instant when I go from the Fire, that he may know when to remove the Sensation by

ceasing to act upon my Soul. All this that Being who causes our Sensations must be supposed to know, and that too exactly and critically, and that too not only here or there, in this or that particular Place, but all the World over, among that vast Number of Rational Creatures, that are in it, and who all partake of the same Sensations by the like Impressions. But now what Being can we suppose capable of such a Province as this, but a Being of infinite Understanding and Power, one that need not go abroad for his Intelligence, but sees all things immediately in himself, and produces all things by the immediate Efficacy of his Will?

We may therefore and must conclude, that 'tis God and God only that acts in us, and is the true and proper Cause of all our Sensations, of that Pleasure and that Pain which we feel by the Mediation of the Corporeal and Sensible World. That in the various Rencounter of Bodies knocking and jostling one against another the only Part of us that is acted upon, is our *Body*: and though our Spirit suffer by that Occasion, yet that 'tis God only that truly acts upon it, and makes it feel whatever it feels. That the most that Bodies can pretend to is only to be the *Causes* of the *Impression* that is made upon our Bodies, and *Occasions* of those *Sentiments* that spring up in our Souls. In fine, that Bodies neither have any thing in them resembling our Sensations, nor any Power to produce them in us, but that 'tis God that produces them by Bodies, who acts
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continually both in and by his Works. So then 'tis not the Sun that enlightens us, but God by the Sun. 'Tis not the Fire that gives us Heat, but God by the Fire. 'Tis not the most delicate Fruit, or the richest Perfume, that delights either our Taste or our Smell, but 'tis God alone that raises Pleasure in us by the Occasion of these Bodies. The whole matter of the Creation though in continual Motion, is yet as to us, that is, to our Spirits, an idle, dead, unactive thing, and that of it self signifies no more to the Production of our several Sensations, than a company of odd Figures or senseless Characters do to the Cure of an *Ague*. The Sun enlightens us, and Fire warms us, just as those Figures *cure* us, and no otherwise. They are Positive Conditions, and that's all; but 'tis God alone that is the true Efficient Cause.

This perhaps will be call'd *Persuading Men out of their Senses*. It may be so, but what then? Men must oftentimes be persuaded out of their *Senses* before they can be persuaded into *Sense*. The Prejudice of the Senses is of all others the most obstinate and cleaving, 'tis what we first take up, and last put off. And I am very apprehensive how strong this great Prejudice lies against the whole Argument of this Discourse; but the Comfort is, that it lies as strong against *Truth* too, which we seldom discover when we listen to the Suggestions of our Senses, and as seldom miss of when we do not. I shall not therefore think it an *Objection* though never so many sensible Prejudices were muster'd up against the present Theory,

Theory, so long as I have clear and evident *Reason* to conclude for the Truth of it, which is the only Oracle we are to consult, and whose Answers we are to regard.

Well then, we have now at length found out the true Cause of all our *Pleasure*, and in that the only proper Object of our *Love*. And certainly, if ever Philosophy were a Hand-Maid to Divinity, it is now, as furnishing us with a certain Ground for the most sublime and noble Conclusion in the World, the full, perfect and intire Love of God, which now appears to be founded upon Principles, and to be demonstrable in a clear and distinct Order of Reasoning. For if God be the only true Cause that acts upon our Spirits, and produces our Pleasure, then he only does us good, he only perfects our Being and makes us happy; and if he only does us good, then he only is our good; and if he only is our good, then he only is lovely, or the proper Object of our Love; and if he only is lovely, then 'tis plain that we ought to love none but him, and him intirely. Or to argue backwards, we are to love nothing but what is lovely; nothing is lovely but what is our good; nothing is our Good, but what does us good; nothing does us good but what causes Pleasure in us; nothing causes Pleasure in us but God; therefore we are to love nothing but God. I say nothing but God, for he is the only lovely Object, and he is infinitely so. Nothing but God, for he only is our Good. Nothing but God, for he only does us good and
makes

makes us happy. Nothing but God, for he only is the Author of all our Pleasure ; and in him we not only live, move and have our Being, but have also all the Joy and Comfort of our Being. Whatever Degree of Good we have receiv'd, we have receiv'd it of him ; whatever we enjoy, we enjoy it in him ; and whatever we expect, we expect it from him, with whom is the *Well of Life*, Psal. 36. 9. and in whose Light we hope to see Light ; and therefore we are to love none but him, and him with the whole Heart, Soul and Mind, with the full weight of our Desire, with all the Activity of our Love.

As we cannot love *beyond* God, so we ought not to love *short* of him. We ought not to love any *Creature*, as having not one Degree of Love but what is due to the Creator. Neither *Body* nor *Spirit* ought to be his *Rivals* in our Love, and then are they to be reckon'd as such, not only when we love them *above* God, but even when we love them *with* him. For indeed we ought not to love them at all, they are not at all *Lovely*, and have therefore no right nor title to the least degree of our Love. No, it is all God's *Peculiar*, and whatever share of it we bestow upon them, it is so much Fire stol'n from God's Altar, and our Love is *Sacrilegious*.

Indeed were Creatures at all *Lovely*, were they in any sense our Good, were they able to do us any, were they the Causes of our Happiness in any Measure, could they give us so much as one grateful Sensation, though it were but that little
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contemptible Pleasure of a sweet Smell, there would be then some portion of our Love due to them. But since there is nothing of all this in them, since they Communicate to me no Good, nor are any more able to please a Faculty than to Create it, what pretence have they to the least interest in my Love? 'Tis plain, that they have none; and as plain, that I ought not to bestow any part of my Love upon them, but to reserve it all for my God, who has all those Qualifications for it which they want, and whom therefore I cannot love as I ought, unless I thus love him with my whole Heart, Soul and Mind.

Were God only our *Summum Bonum*; Were he only our *Chief*, and not our *Only Good* (as 'tis commonly represented) he could then justly pretend to no more than our Chief Love; and we should sufficiently discharge our Devoirs to him by loving him *best* and *most*, by assigning him the principal Room in our Hearts. But he need not be the only Guest there; we might innocently entertain Creatures along with him, being upon this supposition only obliged to allow him the *Precedency*. But alas this is not enough, this will not serve in case God be our *Only Good*, as we have clearly proved that he is; and as we are plainly told that he is, in our Saviour's Answer to him that call'd him Good Master, *Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God*, Mark 10. 18. Interpreters have been strangely put to't to accommodate this Text with a convenient Gloss, to define in what sense this is to be

taken, *That there is none good but God.* One will have it, *None Originally good but God.* Another, *None Supremely good but God.* And a Third, *None Perfectly good but God.* And a Fourth, *None Infinitely good but God.* But 'tis plain, that these all shoot below the Mark. The Text says a great deal more than any, or all of this amounts to; it says absolutely and indefinitely, without any Limitation, *That there is none good but God:* Or, *That God is the Only good.* And this agrees exactly with the Hypothesis now laid down and proved, which will not only bear, but require this literal sense of the Words. For by this it appears, that in the strictest sense, *There is none good but God,* because there is none but he that acts in us, and is the true Cause of all the Pleasure which we do, or can ever enjoy. It all flows, not only from his *Bounty*, but from his very *Operation*; and is not only his *Gift*, but his *Production*; Which certainly is ground enough to ascribe to him the Title of *the only Good.* Other things indeed may be said to be good in *themselves* after a Metaphysical way of speaking, in the same sense as God is said to have pronounc'd all things good that he had made, that is *Metaphysically*, as having all that was requisite to the Integrity and Perfection of their Natural Beings, according to such a Rank or Order in the Creation. In this sense indeed the Creatures are good; for God can make nothing but what is so: But they are not *our* good, they are not good to us, because they do us none, as not being able to affect us with so much

much as one pleasing Sentiment, to add so much as one real degree of Happiness to our Being. No, God is the true Author and Cause of it all; 'tis he that *puts gladness into our Hearts*, Psal. 4. 7. and diffuses his Divine Sweetness throughout our Souls; and therefore he only is our Good, and he only ought to be the Object of all our Love. As for Creatures, they are no more our *Goods* than they are our *Gods*; and we may as well *Worship* them as *Love* them.

We are then to withdraw our Love from the whole Creation (which we may do without any injustice) and fix it all upon the great Author of it. That Love of ours which runs out into so many little Streams, and is dispers'd among so many Objects in the Visible World we are to collect together, and cast into one great Channel, and let it all flow in one full Tide towards God. We are to trace out with diligence all the private ways of this wandring Passion, fetch in every stragling Affection, and not suffer the least weight of our Love to rest upon a Creature. No, we are to summon every Creature to come in and give up that Portion of our Love which it has so long usurp'd, but could never deserve; and when once our Heart is free of them, we are wholly to devote it to God, whom we are to make the Sole Proprietor of our Love, which we are no longer to look upon as *Common*, but as Sacred Fire, which must be wholly appropriated to the *Altar*.

And that we ought to be thus rooted and grounded in Divine Love; and that there is such

a Breadth, Length, Depth and Height in it, that we have not either laid our Foundation too deep, or raised our Structure too high, will appear by many places of Scripture (besides that in the Text) injoyning our Love to God according to the same amplitude and unmeasurable Measure. Such are all those Divine Testimonies as import a not loving or hating of God, when any portion of our Love is bestow'd upon the Creature. To which purpose is that Speech of our Saviour, who was the best Teacher, and the best Patern of Divine Love, Matt. 6. 24. *No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Here we are plainly told, that we cannot divide between God and the Creature ; but that the adhering to the one is the rejecting of the other. And the reason is, not only because our Natural Faculties and Capacities are too Narrow and Scanty to be employ'd upon two such vastly different Objects ; but also because we cannot love either of them but upon such a *Principle* as must utterly exclude the love of the other. For we must not love any thing but what is our true Good, what can both deserve and reward our Love. And there can be but one thing that is so. It must be either God or the Creature. If then the Creature be our Good, let us love that and that only, that and not God ; but if God be our true Good (as most certainly he is) then let us love God and God only, God and not the Creature. For 'tis

a most inconsistent and impracticable thing to talk of carving out our Love between both, *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

To the same purpose, but somewhat more expressly, is that admonition of St. *John*, *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* 1 John 2. 15. Here you have again all Love of the Creature expressly forbidden, as altogether inconsistent with the Love of God. What can be more full and plain, Love not the World, nor the things of the World? I know that according to the Common Gloss this is meant of the *immoderate* Love of the World, as if St. *John* had said, Love not the World *immoderately*, or to excess. But this is only for want of Principles upon which to raise an higher Sense. 'Tis plain that the Words import a great deal more, namely, that we are not to love the World at all, that all Love of it is immoderate. And by the former Measures it appears, how and why it is so.

Hence it is that St. *James* calls such as love the World, and yet at the same time, pretend to be Lovers of God, *Adulterers and Adulteresses*. For after he had spoken of Concupiscence (which is nothing else but the Love of the Creature) as the Seed and Principle of all Wars and Contentions, he thus bespeaks them that were held and possess'd by it, *Ye Adulterers and Adulteresses, know ye not that the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World is the Enemy of God,* Jam. 4. 4. It seems
• that

that in St. *James's* Account our Heart is so much God's Property and Peculiar, and ought so intirely to be devoted to him, that 'tis a kind of Spiritual Fornication and Adultery to admit any Creature into a Partnership with him in our Love. I know but of one sort of Spiritual Sin besides that is call'd *Adultery* in Scripture, and that is the Sin of *Idolatry*, which goes frequently by the Name of going a *Whoring* after other Gods. And so in like manner the Love of the Creature is here said to be *Adultery*, which implies that they are in great measure the same, as having one common Name, and that every Lover of the Creature is in his proportion an Idolater. And so upon our former Principle he is. For by loving Creatures we suppose them our Goods, that they are able to act upon our Souls and affect them with pleasing Sensations, that they perfect our Being and are the Causes of our Happiness, which is to suppose them to be as so many Gods. So that there can be no such thing as loving the World with *Moderation*, since we ought not to love it at all. For we *deifie* the Object that we love, and to affect the Creature in any degree is so far to *Idolize* it.

To the like purpose may be applied that remarkable Passage of St. *Paul*, *The World is crucified unto me, and I unto the World*, Gal. 6. 14. which emphatically comprises our present Conclusion (that the Creature is not to be the Object of our Love) though not (as I once thought) the *Ground* of it. The Apostle here declares himself

self to be crucified to the World, not only indifferently or moderately affected towards it, but perfectly dead and cold to all its Embraces, and altogether insensible and unmoved at all its Charms. For indeed to what purpose should a Man hug and embrace a Carcase, or be *alive* to that which is *dead* to him? Let me embrace the World never so long, I shall never be able to impart a vital Heat to it, to quicken it into Life and Motion; but that perhaps may communicate some of its Coldness to me, chill and benumb my Faculties. It may if I throw my Arms about it and embrace it; but I will not, I will be as dead to that as that is to me, keep at a distance from it, and not glance one languishing Look towards it, but rather treat it as a dead Carcase; bury it out of my sight, and leave it to putrifie in Silence and Forgetfulness.

And thus have I represented the full and true Latitude and Extent of *Divine Love*, and in that the full and true Import of this first and great Commandment of loving the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind, which now appears to be a great Commandment indeed, both worthy of him that gave it, and worthy of that solemn Mark of Attention wherewith it was delivered, *Hear, O Israel*, Deut. 6. 4. And let all the whole Creation hear, and with Silence attend to the Words of this great Law, which lest any should fancy himself exempt or unconcern'd, seems to be expressly directed to every particular Creature by Name, as it were, in the second Person.

Thou

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, all thy Soul, and all thy Mind. My Son, give me thy Heart, we may now suppose to be the Language of the Great God to every Rational Creature. Give me thy Heart, for 'twas I that made it, 'twas I that gave it thee, 'twas I that kindled in it a vital Flame, 'twas I that gave it its Pulse and its Motion, and that for no other end but to direct and incline it towards me, the only proper Object of its tendency. For 'tis I also that am thy true Good, all thy Springs are in me, 'tis I that refresh thy dry and thirsty Soul with the Streams of *Eden*, 'tis I that raise in thee all thy grateful Sensations, and am the true Cause of all thy Pleasure and Delight. Therefore, my Son, give me thy Heart. I only merit, and 'tis I alone that can reward thy Love; Let none therefore have any Share in it but me, and let me have it all. This is the Measure of Divine Love, and this is the Scope and Intendment of this great Law, and these are the Natural and Moral Reasons upon which it is founded. By which you may see what noble Divinity may be dug up out of the Mines of Philosophy, and how necessary it is to have a right System of Nature in order to the thorough Comprehension of *Christian Morality*, which has its Bottom and Foundation in the Nature of things, and is accordingly as capable of Demonstration as any Theorem in that Science, whose Character is *Evidence and Certainty*.

If it should now be objected (as 'tis very probable it may) that the enlarging this First Com-

mandment to such a Magnitude, will make it devour and swallow up the Second. For if the Love of God must be thus perfect and entire, so as to be exclusive of all Creatures, what room can then be left for the Love of our *Neighbour*? To this the Answer is very easie and very clear. If our Love to God and our Neighbour were of the same kind, the entire Love of the former would indeed wholly exclude that of the latter. But this is not the Case. We are not here supposed to love God in the same sense, or with the same sort of Love wherewith we love our Neighbour. We do not love God by wishing any Good to him (whereof he is not capable) but by wishing him as a Good to our selves. On the contrary, we do not, or at least should not love our Neighbour by wishing him as a Good to our selves, (for he is not our Good) but by wishing Good to him. That is in short, we love God with Love of *Desire*, and we love our Neighbour with Love of *Benevolence* or Charity. But now the entire Desire of God is very consistent with all manner of Benevolence to our Neighbour. It does indeed wholly exclude all love of Desire towards him. But this is what I contend for, I would have the Love of God so vehement and so ardent, as to burn up, devour, yea, utterly annihilate all *Desire* of the Creature.

Must I not then you'll say, at all love Creatures? What may I not love this or that delicate Fruit, or this or that rich Wine? May not I love what delights my Palate, and yields me pleasure? Yes, if

if Bodies were the true Causes of your pleasure, you might, nay you ought to love them, as being upon that supposition your proper Good. But this is the very thing they are defective in ; we have clear and incontestable Reason to assure us, that they are not the true real Causes of any of our Sensations. But however, there is Pleasure, you'll say, *annex'd* to them ; for we feel Pleasure in the *Use* of such and such sensible things. True, we do so, but the most that ought to be concluded from hence is, that we may *seek* and *use* these sensible things, to which by the Order and Institution of Nature, Pleasure is *annex'd* : As on the contrary, that we are to shun and avoid those sensible things to which is *annex'd* the opposite Sentiment of Pain. But it will not hence follow, that either the former is to be loved, or the latter to be fear'd. 'Tis true indeed, that Pleasure it self is always lovely, and so is the true Cause of it. We must love whatever is able to cause Pleasure in us, and in whose power it is to make us Happy. But then we must take heed lest we mistake that for the true *Efficient Cause* which is only the *Occasion* ; lest we attribute our Sensations to Bodies as their proper Effect, to the production of which they serve only as *Positive Conditions*, determining the Operation of God, the only true *Efficient Cause*. So much indeed must be allow'd them, but our Reason will not suffer us to allow them any more ; and though in regard that they do so much they may be innocently *sought* for and *used*, yet because they do no more,

they must not be *loved*. As we *must* love the Efficient Cause of our Pleasure, so we *may* seek after, and make use of that which is the Occasion of it ; but this is all, we must not advance one step higher, for we have no Warrant beyond this. So that though I may eat of a pleasant Fruit, and enjoy Pleasure in the use of it, yet I must not make it the object of my Love ; I must not place any degree of Affection upon it. I am to remember, that though in the Eating of this Fruit I find my self delighted, yet this Pleasure is neither in the Fruit it self, nor from it, but that 'tis God that raises this grateful Sentiment in my Soul, and accordingly I am thankfully and devoutly to acknowledge and reverence his Divine Operation, and to *Love him* all the while I *use* and *enjoy* the *other*. The short then of this matter resolves into this, we may seek and use sensible things for our Good, but we must not love them *as* our Good.

But may we not love the Creatures with a *Relative* Love ? So indeed it is said by some, who think they strain the Love of God to a very high Pitch, when they tell us, that we must love nothing but God, or in Order and Relation to God. So then, according to these Men, we are allow'd to love Creatures, provided it be in a way of Relation and Subordination to God, who upon this Principle is not to be the *Only*, but only the *Final* and *Ultimate* Object of our Love. But methinks these Men's Relative Love is very much like the Relative Worship of the Papists. They
make

make God the only *ultimate* Object of all Divine Worship ; and so do these Men make him the only *last* Object of Love ; But yet they allow of giving Divine Worship to a Creature, provided it be in a *transitive* and *relative* way ; that is, provided it only pass through the Creature, and terminate upon God. And so these Men allow of bestowing our Love upon a Creature, provided it be for God's sake, or in *relation* to God, provided it do not stop and rest at the Creature, but run on, till at last it fix upon God as its final Object. The Notions are exactly Parallel to each other, and they both shew how extreamly loath Men are to take a final leave of the Creature, to disengage intirely from sensible things. They cannot be perfectly wean'd from what they so dearly affect, and therefore would fain contrive the matter so, as in the midst of all their Love and Devotion to God, to have still some Reserve for the Creature ; to maintain some little undercurrent of Religion and Affection for sensible things, which they would still have leave to Worship and Love, though it be never so remotely and indirectly, though it be but in a *Relative* way. This I take to be the true Ground and Bottom of both these Notions, the Common Disease of our Nature, the great Propensity of the Soul to sensible things, which makes Men still willing to allow them a share both in their Religion and in their Affection ; and that they might do it with the better Colour, has put them upon finding out this Notable Distinction of a *Relative Worship*,

and of a *Relative Love*. And truly I think one is as good as the other ; that we may as well Worship the Creature with a *Relative Worship*, as well as Love the Creature with a *Relative Love*. For 'tis plain that this later Distinction does as much suppose that God only is the *proper Object of Love*, as the other does suppose that he is the only *proper Object of Worship*, otherwise, what need this Qualification of our Love to the Creature that it be *Relative*? Well, but if so, then as to worship the Creature though but *Relatively*, is to give that Worship to the Creature which is proper to God ; so to love the Creature though but *Relatively*, is in like manner to give that Love to the Creature which is proper to God. And if this be thought a sufficient Reason to disallow of a *Relative Worship*, I cannot see why we should not for the very same Reason give Sentence against this *Relative Love*, or why one should not be reckon'd Idolatry as well as the other. But to bring this Matter to a compendious Issue, the short is this ; either Creatures are truly and really lovely, as being our true and proper Good, or they are not. If they are, then a *Relative Love* is too *little*, we ought to love them with more than a *Relative Love*, we ought to love them *Absolutely* and for themselves. But if they are not (as by a Light as clear as Day it appears they are not) then even a *Relative Love* is too *much*. For what is not truly lovely, is always loved too much if it be loved at all. So that either way there is no Pretence for admitting this last expedient

dient of our Concupiscence, the Relative Love of the Creature. And thus all the Doors and Avenues of the Heart of Men are shut fast and bolted against the Creatures, who are now all banish'd from this Seat of Love, and God only left in Possession there.

Thus it is in *Theory*, but oh when will it be thus in *Practice*? When will degenerate Mankind rise up to this noble Pitch of Divine Love? When shall we thus love the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind? When shall we be thus loose and free from the Creatures? When shall we learn to lift up our Hearts above this sensible World? When shall we exalt our Souls above the Love of Bodies? When shall we leave off to idolize Matter? *O wretched Men that we are, who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death!* Rom. 7. 24. The Soul by her Body has contracted such an Alliance with the Material World, that we have a sort of Magnetick Inclination towards sensible things which in some Men is exalted to that degree, that instead of loving God with all their Hearts, Souls and Minds, they love the *World* at that rate, making that their God, their End, their Supream Good. Wonderful Stupidity, as well as Impiety, to love that beyond and more than God, which we are not so much as to love at all! What a Reverse is this of this great Law, to love the World as we are commanded to love God, with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind! Who would ever think it possible that the Great God should be thus out-rival'd

by his Creatures ? But the misery of it is, as we *live* by Sense, so we *love* also by Sense. We dwell in Matter, and we are environ'd all round with Matter, so that we cannot get through the Croud and Throng of Creatures to come at our God. The Creatures do so press upon us, and so continually court our Love by addressing themselves to all our Senses, that we cannot deny their importunity. They also have the advantage of being the only Objects of our Sight, for none shall see me and live, saith God. Let us enlarge our Prospect never so far and wide, we see nothing but Creatures. In them our Prospect begins, and in them it terminates. They also have the Privilege to stand before us and look us, as it were, in the Face whenever we feel Pleasure or Pain ; and 'tis at their Impression that we ordinarily have these Sentiments, which imposes upon our Imaginations, making us apt to look upon them as the Causes of our Good and of our Evil, and accordingly as the proper Objects of our Love, and of our Fear ; and all because we have our Sensations at their Presence and upon their Impression, while in the mean while God, who is the true Cause, appears not in view, but hides himself from us, and acts *his* part behind a Cloud. But were our Eyes once open'd, could we but see how absolutely and intirely we depend upon God both for our Being, and for the whole Perfection of it, for all that we are, have or enjoy ; how he alone acts in us, and causes our Sensations ; how he inlightens our Understandings

ings with his Light, warms our Wills with his Love, and refreshes our Souls with his *Pleasure*, while in the mean time all the Creatures stand mute and silent before him, and like so many *Cyphers*, in his Presence, having not the least Activity or Operation upon our Spirits; I say, could we have such a Scene as this before us, we should quickly dismiss the whole Creation from our Hearts, and be wholly possess'd and swallow'd up with the Love of God. We should then love God as God loves himself, not with the same *Infinity*, but with the same *Intireness* of Love. For as God loves none but himself, so should we then love nothing but God.

○ In the mean while I make no question but that it is *now* thus in *Heaven*. The Saints and Angels there with their Beatifick Vision of God, have also a clear Sight of their absolute and intire dependance upon him. They see the true Origin of all Good, and can trace Happiness to its Head. They see where and whence its Springs do rise, that they all issue forth from the Foot of the Throne, where is the *Well of Life* spoken of both by the *Psalmist* and by *St. John*, *Psal.* 36. *Rev.* 22. 1. whence all the Streams of Pleasure take their several Channels to water and refresh the mystical *Eden*, the Intellectual Garden of God. All this which we are now fain to argue out by a train of Consequences, is plainly laid open to the clear view of the blessed Inhabitants of that Place, which must necessarily represent God to them as the only lovely Object, and by consequence

quence take off every degree of their Love from the Creature, and collect together, and settle the whole Force and Weight of it upon God, that *so be may be All in All.* This is the Measure of Divine Love in Heaven, and this ought to be the Measure of it upon Earth.

With Angels therefore and Arch-Angels, and with all the Company of Heaven, let us unclasp our Arms from the Imbraces of the Creation, and adore and love the Lord our God with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind. Let not God any longer divide with the Creature (which is not a fit Companion for so Divine a Guest) but let him reign an absolute Monarch in our Hearts, and ingross our whole Love, especially since that whole is so little. Love is the great *Bias* which God has put into our Natures to carry us towards himself. And thither let it carry us, and there let it fix and lodge our Souls, which are then in their greatest Perfection when in the full and intire *Love and Enjoyment* of God. To whom be all Glory and all Love. *Amen.*

*A Discourse concerning the Natural,
and the Moral Vanity of Man.*

P S A L. xxxix. 6.

*Surely every Man walketh in a vain shew, surely
they are disquieted in vain.*

Or as in the other Translation.

*Man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth
himself in vain.*

Even Man, who was made and intended by God for the greatest and most excellent End, and was accordingly furnish'd with all proper Means for the attainment of this End, having an excellent Nature given him, duly temper'd and pois'd between dry Intelligence and blind Appetite, being altogether neither One nor the Other, but enrich'd with Vigour of Inclination, and a Bright Understanding to govern it, with the Light of Reason, and with the Flame of Passion, having at once the advantage both of Sail and Compass, and so capable both of knowing, chusing, and enjoying his Supreme and Only Good.

Even

Even *Man*, who is the very Draught and Transcript of his Creator, and the Master-piece of all his Lower Creation : Who has Dominion given him over all the Vegetable and Sensitive World ; upon whom both Sun and Moon wait, and the Stars in their Courses pay Attendance, to whom the very Angels are Guardians, and for whose sake the Heavenly Bodies both *Move* and *Shine*. Who upon his entrance into Being, put his Maker to the Stand, gave Infinite Wisdom a Pause, and raised a Solemn Consultation in Heaven, as being at once the Conclusion and the Compendium of the six days Work.

Even Man, who *applies his heart to know, and to search, and to seek out Wisdom, and the Reason of things*, that Grafts the Accomplishments of Art upon the Stock of Nature, and by the improvement of Study and Education stands upon higher ground ; and distinguishes himself as much from the common Pitch of Men, as they are distinguish'd from the Level of Beasts. Man that is saluted with the Titles of *Learned* and *Wise*, that is supposed to understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledg, and (which is more) that does really understand his own Ignorance ; that knows much, and that that much is little ; and so is not lifted up with his Knowledg, nor has his Head turn'd with the Height upon which he stands. Man too that towres and plumes upon his Endowments, that views himself with the magnifying end of the *Prospective* ; and others with that which Contracts ; that has some Wisdom,
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and pretends to a great deal more ; that sits down and enjoys his past Attainments, thinking himself too Wise (as others too Dull) for further Improvement : Man, let him be what he will for Eminence, either Really or in Opinion, either by Nature or by Art, as Great and Noble a Creature as he is, and as Great as he takes himself to be, notwithstanding all his real and all his imaginary Grandeur, *He walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.*

The Words are a very mean and degrading Character of a very high and Noble Creature, enough to mortifie and take him down in the midst of all his Pride and Glory, as presenting to his View (what he seldom has the Happiness to see) a true Picture of himself, and that set in a true and proper Light, pointing out and describing a twofold Vanity of Man, the Vanity of his State, and the Vanity of his Life ; the one a Moral, and the other a Natural Vanity ; which indeed is all the Vanity that a Creature is capable of.

For 'tis to be consider'd, that the words are a particular instance and reason of a general Proposition. The Psalmist had said just before that *every Man living is altogether Vanity, or, Vanity all over* ; and then immediately adds as a Reason of so severe a Reflection, *For man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain.* As if he had said, there are but two possible ways whereby Man may become Vain : Or, there is but a twofold Vanity that Man, or any other Creature is capable

capable of, Vanity of *State*, and Vanity of *Life*; that Vanity which relates to the Nature and Being, and that which relates to the Demeanour and Conduct of a Creature; and both these are found in Man. The Vanity of Nature, in that he walketh in a *Vain Shadow*, and the Vanity of Conduct, in that he also *disquiets himself in Vain*. And therefore Man is altogether Vanity.

Altogether Vanity, so we render it, more according to the Septuagint than the Hebrew. In the Hebrew it is *Universal Vanity*; as if all the Vanity and Misery that is scatter'd up and down among other Creatures, were collected together and sum'd up in Man; so that Man should be, as it were, a little Abridgment or Compendium of Vanity. In the Septuagint it is τὰ πάντα ματαιότης, *quoad Omnia Vanitas*, Vanity as to all things, as to every part, and in every respect, in what Posture, or in what Light soever you place him, or in what Capacity or Relation soever you consider him. And between these two Rendrings there is considerable difference, even as much as there is between saying, that Man is *All Vanity*, and that *All of Man* is Vanity; One making Vanity to possess the Whole of Man, and the other making Man to possess or ingross the Whole of Vanity; which indeed is the stronger and bolder expression of the two.

But we need not be very solicitous about this; for take it in what sense you will, either that Man is *Universal Vanity*, according to the *Hebrew*, or that he is *Altogether Vanity* according to the *Septuagint*;

Septuagint ; they are both of them equally and sufficiently deducible and justifiable from this very strange, and very Melancholy Account the Psalmist gives of Man, that he *walketh in a Vain Shadow, and disquiets himself in Vain.* Wherein you have all the Vanity that is or possibly can be, all that Man or any other Creature is capable of, Vanity of State or Being, and Vanity of Conduct, both Natural and Moral Vanity.

And first of all to begin with the Natural Vanity of Man, the Vanity of his State or Being, express'd in the former part of the Text, *Man walketh in a Vain Shew or Shadow.* In an Image, (for so the Original צל signifies) not a solid substantial Image, but Airy, Flitting, and Phantastick Appearance, such as is in a Looking-Glass, or in a Dream, or in a Shadow. In such an Image does Man Walk, and is a kind of a *Spectrum* even while he lives. We read in the Scripture and elsewhere, of the *Shadow of Death* ; and truly the Darkness and Obscurity of that State is ground enough for the Figure. But here we meet with another sort of Shadow, the Shadow of *Life*, and that a Vain Shadow too, a Shadow without a Substance, a Shew without any Reality, a meer Apparition. For such, and no better, is the whole State and Being of Man in this World. Indeed at the Opening of the next Scene, when the Veil of Mortality shall be laid aside, and the Curtain that now parts between the Material and Intellectual World shall be drawn, 'tis to be hoped that a more Substantial View of things shall be
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laid out before him, but at present the best account we can give of him is, *that he Walks in a Vain Shadow.*

For the illustration of this, I might easily take the whole Frame of Man in pieces, and as a sort of *Moral Anatomist*, read a Lecture of Vanity upon every Part, upon his Body, and upon his Soul, and upon the Powers and Faculties of each. I might tell you of the Weakness and Frailness of his Body, that as it carries within it self the Causes of a necessary and speedy Dissolution: So it is also liable to a thousand Accidents *without* that may hasten its ruin. A Structure of so difficult a raising, of so uncertain a standing, and of so short duration, that some have wonder'd, and made it an Objection against the Wisdom of the great Artist, that he would bestow so much Art upon such Vile Materials, that he would be so elaborate upon a Trifle, and spend such a deal of curiosity and exactness upon so transitory, so perishing a Work, the very delicacy and fineness of whose Composition subjects it to innumerable Disorders, whereof the Soul also has a share, and is a very sensible Partaker. A Work so form'd and laid out for Ruin, so naturally doom'd and order'd to Destruction, that though no other particular Evil should befall it, yet the whole Machine and Revolution of the Universe labours to destroy it, and the great and general Motion of Nature is continually carrying away some part of it, as the constant Course of a great and swift River, undermines the Foundations of a Building.

I might also represent to you the many Wants and Necessities of our Nature, and our great dependance upon other Inferiour Creatures, as well as upon those of the same Order with our selves. The great helplessness and infirmity of two parts of our little Time, *Infancy* and *Old Age*, and that great disorder of Sickness to which the whole is liable. That even our very Life and Health depend upon a Disease (for Hunger and Thirst are no better) and the necessary Recruit of our Spirits upon the interruption of our Reason, and the waste of our Time, almost half of which is consumed in Sleep, that great *Tax* and *Custom* of Nature upon the Life of Man.

The Vanity of whose present state, I might further describe from the Darknes of his Understanding, and the Narrowness of his Conception, which is able to apply it self but to one Single Object at a time ; and that too so imperfectly, that he is fain oftentimes to divide the most Simple Being into several partial, inadequate Idea's, (being not able to take it in all at once) to contract and lessen the Object, that so he may adjust and proportion it to his own Narrowness. I might here also remark how few are the things that he knows even as to their meer *Existence*, and how much fewer yet as to their *Nature*. That he knows but little of God, and little of his Works. That he is equally baffled and confounded by the Mysteries of Faith, and by the Appearances of Nature : Not to say any thing of the Mazes and Labyrinths of Providence. That he knows no-

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thing of Spirits, and but little of Bodies, and least of all of that Particular Body to which he is so wonderfully and so closely united, that he often takes it for *Himself*; which he animates and governs, and (such is his misfortune) more often *serves*.

All this I might yet further illustrate from the great irregularity of the Will and Passions; which indeed is the weakest and blindest side of Man, the darkest part of this *Shadow*, and in which respect alone he may well be said to *Walk in a Vain Shew*, and to be *altogether Vanity*. But I shall content my self to have given a Confuse Glance at these things, leaving the more particular improvement of these few general Hints to your own private thoughts, while in the mean time I descend to some more concerning and less obvious Considerations.

What we are now upon, is to give an Account of the Natural Vanity of Man, and how he *walks in a Vain Shew*. I know I should appear too Abstract and Metaphysical, and withal, Paradoxical to most vulgar and unprepared Minds, should I account for this by saying, That the whole Visible and Sensible World is, as to us, a *Vain Shew*, a meer Cheat, a Delusion, a Dream. Not I mean as to the *Existence*, but as to the *Appearance* of Sensible Objects. That what we think we see, taste, and smell in Bodies that are without us, is not really in the Bodies themselves, but is all transacted within our own Minds, That the warmth of the Fire (to speak popularly) and
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the Light of the Sun, the sweet Odours of Flowers, and the delicious Relish of Fruits, the rich Enamel of the Field, and the Blushes of the Morning, with all the whole Varnish and Imagry of Colours, with which both the Sense and Understanding of Man is so refresh'd and entertain'd, and for the sake of which we think the World so pleasant a Region, are so Airy and Chearful in it, and so loath to leave it, that all these are not in the things themselves, where we think we perceive them, but are only certain *Modifications* of our own Souls, certain Sensations raised in them by the Author of Nature at the Presence of outward Bodies, and upon the impression which they make upon our Organs of Sense. So that the whole World is like an *enchanted Island*, where we have fine Landskips and Pictures presented to our View; and that in so lively a manner, that we cannot forbear thinking that 'tis all a Reality without, when in the mean while, there is nothing of all this real but the *Sensation*, the whole being only an *Intellectual Scene*, transacted within our own selves. I say, should I make this to be the Condition of Man in this World, and that thus he *Walks in a vain shew*, among Cheats and Delusions, empty Representations and false Appearances, his whole Natural Life being no better than a pleasing Dream, I should offer nothing more than what is strictly and Philosophically true, and what I could easily Demonstrate upon the best Principles of Science that ever yet appear'd in the World. But this

being too abstract and remote from common Apprehension, I shall chuse rather to observe.

I. *That Man walketh in a vain shew of Truth.* Not that I would be thought so much a Sceptic as to deny that there is any such thing as *Truth*, or that we may have the *Knowledge* of it, or that we may also have a full and certain *Assurance* of that Knowledge. I readily grant, that there are not only things that *are* true, but that *must* be true, that there are necessary and eternal Truths; and he that denies that there is any such thing as *Truth*, supposes at least that Proposition of his to be true, whereby he sufficiently confutes himself. And I do as little question the being of Knowledge and Certainty. I am well satisfied, that Reason assures us of the Existence of some things, and Revelation of more, and that God has given to every Man Light and Knowledge enough to instruct him in his Duty, and to direct him in the Way that leads to Heaven, enough to answer all those wise Ends for which God designed him, though perhaps not enough to compass some of those false Ends of Vanity, Ambition and Curiosity which Man may propose to himself. And that every Man has or may have Understanding enough to Live well, and be a good Christian, though every one cannot be a *Virtuoso*.

When therefore I say that Man walketh in a Vain Shew of *Truth*, my Meaning is, that of those many things which do seem to us here to be Truths, the far greatest part are far otherwise
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in their own Nature, and do appear otherwise to brighter Understandings that view them in a clearer and purer Light. Not but that Truth and right Reason is one and the same in both Worlds, but a great deal of that which we take for Truth, is otherwise conceiv'd by Beings of a superior Rank. I will not go so high for this as the supreme Being, concerning whom we are expressly told, that *his Thoughts are not like our Thoughts, nor his Ways like our Ways*; Isa. 55. 8. but if an Angel were to write a System of Philosophy or Divinity, there is reason to think that he would give an Account of things very different from what is vulgarly receiv'd, since even Men in their more mature and improved Age do often find reason to retract and unravel their greener Sentiments, and enter upon a new Set of Thoughts. An eminent Instance of which we have in St. *Austin*, who retracted a great part of his former Doctrins; and were his deceased Spirit now to have another Review of his Works, 'tis like he would retract even several of his Retractions.

But not to meddle any farther with the different Sentiments of *superiour* Beings, we may be sufficiently sensible what a Vain Shew of Truth we walk in from that Difference of Apprehension that is among our selves. That great Diversity of Opinion, and Variety of Contradiction that is in the World, is a sufficient Argument of this. For it being impossible that among contradictory Opinions any more than one of a side

should be in the right, 'tis certain that all the rest can only have a *vain shew* of Truth. And if you would know how great the Extent of that is, do but consider what Diversity of Opinion there is among Men. This might be shewn throughout the whole Compass of Science; but I shall instance at present only in *Religion*, where Man has the greatest Concern to seek after the *Truth*, and with all the greatest Light and Assistance to find and discover it, and yet 'twould even maze one to think how very different and opposite the Conceptions of Men are in this matter, and what variety of Religions there are in the World, there being hardly two Men to be found even of those that profess to be of the same Religion in general, nay and of the same Sect and Way in particular, that are all throughout of the same Judgment. Christians differ not only from those which are not Christians, but from one another. Papists from Protestants, and each of these from one another. So that were one to give an Account of all the opposite Persuasions in Religion that are now going at once, one might sooner make a *Voluminous* than a *Perfect* History. But now Truth is One and Intire, and of all these several Religious Persuasions there can be but one of a side that is true; and therefore the Maintainers of all the rest must walk in a Vain Shew, and embrace Error instead of Truth. How far these Errors may prove damnable to them is another Question; I only remark at present how vastly numerous and extensive

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five the Errors and Mistakes about Religion must needs be where the Diversity and Contradiction is so great, and where the Truth is so single. But I also observe

II. *That Man walketh in a Vain Shew of Happiness.* And this is a much vainer Shew than the other; For there is some real Truth to be found (tho' we must dig low for it) and of that which we embrace for such all is not mere Shew and Shadow. But now 'tis most certain and demonstrable both from Reason and from Experience, from the Nature of Things and from the Nature of Man, that there is no such thing as true and real Happiness to be found in this State. For *with thee is the Well of Life*, Psal. 36. 9. that Well whose living Water can be a constant Spring within our Souls, to quench and satisfy that great and general Thirst of Human Nature, which will be allay'd only by him that made it, the *Fountain of Being and Happiness*. With thee is the Well of Life, and with thee only; We have here only the Shadow of it, which can no more satisfy the Desire of our Spirit, than a painted River can quench our natural Thirst. He that drinks of this Water will thirst again, nay he will thirst even while he drinks it.

Plato is said to call Light the shadow of God, and 'tis as true of all the other pleasing and refreshing Things of this World as well as of Light, that they are Shadows, and but Shadows of God the supreme and only substantial Good. And as a Shadow, though it may a little refresh and allay

our *Heat*, will yet never be able to quench our *Thirst*, so the good Things of this World (those little Shadows of the true Good) though they may by the help of our Fancy afford us some Refreshment, can never yield us Satisfaction. *Cool* they may (as Shadows do) but cannot *Quench*.

And yet though 'tis thus certain that there is no such Thing as true and real Happiness to be had in this State, it must be confest that there is at the same time so flattering, so bewitching an *Appearance* of it, that the wisest of Men after all their Reasonings, Reflections, and Experiences, are deluded by it. Though they have tried the Vanity, the Nullity of Fruition never so often, and have found it to be all over Cheat and Fal-lacy by a thousand Experiments, yet forgetting the Treacheries of this grand Impostor (who like the Devil has been a Liar from the beginning) and how grossly they have been abused and disap-pointed by him, they fall on to their Enjoy-ments again with as much Edge and Greediness, with as much Hope and Expectation, as if they had never known what Disappointment meant ; and though they can never say they *have* been, or *are*, yet they cannot forbear imagining that they *shall* be Happy. Strange kind of Inchantment, that Men should be thus condemn'd to hunt after Sha-dows, and embrace Dreams, to seek continually after Happiness where it is not to be found, and where they know it is not to be found, by all the Reason and Proportion of Things, by the express Declarations of God in Scripture, and by all the

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Experience of Mankind. But this is part of that *Vain Shew* wherein Man walks, wherein I say he *Walks*, but wherein he can never sit down and rest, every Step he makes presenting him with some new Appearance of Happiness, and drilling him on further, so that he still walks on, till he comes to the End of his Walk, and then turns round upon the same Enjoyments again; so that he can never get out of the *Inchanted Circle*.

This is the *Natural Vanity* of Man, and thus far he is rather to be pitied than blamed, it being all founded upon the necessary Weakness and Infirmary of his Nature. But to bring him deservedly under the severest Censure, and to compleat the Character of his Vanity, he not only walks in a *Vain Shew*, but is withal such a Fool as to disquiet himself in vain, which is his *Moral Vanity*, and the next thing to be consider'd.

He disquieteth himself in vain. Innumerable are the Instances wherein he does so; but I shall briefly glance at a few, which I shall bring within the compass of these two general Heads, *Impossibilities* and *Unnecessaries*. The *Impossibilities* are of two sorts, *Impossible Truths*, and *Impossible Goods*. The Former impossible to be understood, the Latter impossible to be enjoy'd.

I. Man disquiets himself in Vain about *Impossible Truths*, such Truths as are not possible for him to Comprehend. So do all they first who imploy their Studies, and it may be write Voluminous Treatises about such things whereof we have no manner of *Idea*, and of which Consequently

quently they can neither Affirm, nor Deny any thing to any purpose, or with any Satisfaction. As particularly about Spirits and Immaterial Substances, whereof we know not enough to be ever in a Capacity of Learning more, as having neither Idea, nor Principle to proceed upon, and which therefore a Man may Study a thousand Years and be never the Wiser. And yet how much Study and Thought has there been imploy'd, how much Time wasted, how much Sleep and Health lost, how many Tedious Volumes Composed, and how many fine Heads turn'd and crack'd upon this Desperate and unconquerable Theory!

So do they also Secondly, who trouble their Heads and rack their thoughts about such things which though they have some Idea of, yet it is so Obscure and Imperfect, that they can never hope to have a full and clear Comprehension of them, either as they are simply in themselves, or as they stand in relation with other things. Such are all the Inquiries and Disputes about Infinity and Eternity, about Space and Time, about the Divisibility of Quantity, about the Principle of Individuation, about Liberty and Necessity, and the reconciling of Prescience with Contingency, about the Ends of God, and the Reasons and Order of Providence, and the like. These are the things of so abstruse a Nature, and whereof our Idea's are so very Confuse and Obscure, that we can never come to have any tolerable Comprehension of them, or Satisfaction about them, let us Study and Wrangle never so long. And yet

yet Man is so Foolish and Vain as to disquiet himself (perhaps others too) in the search of such impossible Truths, not considering how much better it would become him, and how much more it would be for his ease to learn the true Bounds that divide Opinion from Knowledge, to study the Extent of his own Capacity (which one would think should be quickly learnt) and to sit down in a quiet Ignorance of those things to which his Understanding is not proportioned, and to know the Length of his own *Line*, since he cannot all the Depths of the *Ocean* in which he Sails.

II. I should now shew Secondly, how Man Disquiets himself about impossible *Good*, as well as impossible Truth, but having given a pregnant Instance of this already, in the constant and eager Chase after Happiness, wherein Men both tire and delude their Souls, notwithstanding the many repeated Experiments and Convictions of the World's Vanity, I shall stay no longer upon this part, but go on to shew how they disquiet themselves about *Unnecessaries*, which again are of two sorts, unnecessary Truth, and unnecessary Good.

I. Man Disquiets himself in Vain about *unnecessary Truth*. There is no other Truth necessary to be made the Object of Human Study, but only that which serves to the Moral Conduct of Man, to the Recollection of his Mind, to the Government of his Passions, and to the Direction of his Life and Manners in such a way as may lead him to Eternal Happiness, that which in one word
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the Apostle calls, *The Truth which is after Godliness*, Tit. 1. 1. This is the only Truth that Man is concerned either to seek after or attain, either to know himself, or to promote in others. For though other Truths absolutely, and in themselves considered, may be perfective of Human Understanding (which was made for the Contemplation of Truth) yet considering the present Station and Order of Man, he is concerned to trouble himself about no other than what serves to the Regulation of his Life and Manners, that being the only Business he has to do in this World. 'Tis certainly both the *Wisdom* and the *Duty* of every Rational Creature to employ his Study about those things only to which his Capacity is proportioned, and which are of present Concernment to him to be informed of those things that are Possible and Necessary to be known. And I know but of one sort of things that have both these Conditions, *viz.* things of a Moral or Divine Nature, that relate to Life and Manners: Which are the only proper Objects for the Study of Man, as his Circumstances now stand, while he is acting his Probation for another World. He is not therefore now to study what will barely accomplish his Mind, but what will lead him to his *End*, this being the true Measure to be observed by Man in his Search after Learning and Knowledge, as I have more largely shewn in a * particular Treatise upon this Occasion. But now if this be a true Measure (as by all the Principles of

* *Reflections upon
the Conduct of
Human Life.*

of Reason it must) I need not stand to reflect how ill the General way of Study will bear it, or how Vain the Thoughts and Meditations even of the most awaken'd and thinking part of Mankind will be found to be, or about how many unnecessary Truths they disquiet themselves. The Subject is indeed at once too plain, and too tender to bear any further Reflexion. And therefore I shall hasten to consider,

2. How Man disquiets himself in vain about unnecessary Good. I might here go a very short way to work, since our Saviour, who well understood both the Nature and the Necessities of Man, does expressly assure us that there is but *One thing Needful*, and we have as much reason to believe it as any part of the *Gospel*. And if there be but One Thing Necessary, then how infinite are the *Unnecessaries* or rather Impertinencies that take up and torment the Thoughts of Men! But to take a little wider Compass, do they not trouble and disquiet their Minds about the Superfluities and Luxuriances of Life, fine Cloaths and rich Equipage, things that are so far from serving any Necessity; that they do not so much as add to the real and natural Convenience of Life, but rather to the Load and Burthen of it? Do they not disquiet themselves about Phantastick and Imaginary Goods; which many *Happy* Men never have, and some (the Wiser they) never desire, I mean Greatness, Dignity and Honour, which add as much to a Man's Happiness, or real Worth, as a high Shoe, or as a rising Ground
does

does to his Natural Stature, and no more. Are they not uneasy and full of Concern about Fame and Glory, about their Titles and their Coats of Arms, about their Pedigree and about their Posterity, about the Opinions and Censures of Men, what estimation and respect they possess in their Minds, what they think, and what they say of them? Are they not solicitous to procure a handsome Character in the World, and to be thought to deserve it, to appear Witty and Ingenious, Men of Parts and Learning, of Conduct and Sagacity, and (perhaps) of Piety and Religion, and are they not inwardly troubled and discomposed when they think they fail of any of these little Ends, or when they hear of any thing said to their Disreputation, or meet with any Disrespect? Do not Men disquiet themselves about having Heirs to a great Estate, continuing their Name, and living (as they call it) in their Posterity? Do they not trouble themselves about Possibilities and Contingencies, about what shall be, or what may be, so as not to be able either to enjoy the present, or to be thankful for what is past, merely for the anxious Concern they have about what is to come? Nay, are there not many so beyond all measure sottish as to be possessed with a troublesom Care of what shall fall out after they are Dead and in the Grave, and to leave behind them a Stock of Praise and Commendation, which either they shall not then be in a Condition to *know*, or will certainly *despise*? So vain is the Shew that Man walks in, and so many

many are the ways whereby he acts the Tyrant and the Executioner upon his own Mind, and disquiets himself in vain. A Character so very applicable to every Man, more or less, that journeys upon the Road of this World, that our Church in her Wisdom has thought fit to appoint this Psalm of which the Text is a part, to be used in her Funeral-Office at the Burying of the Dead ; thereby implying, that there is no Man, though never so Great, Wise, or Good, but of whom it may justly be said at his last *Exit*, and upon whose Tomb it may be inscribed as the concluding *Motto* of his Life, that he has walkt in a vain shew, and disquieted himself in vain. Some indeed do pass away their time so quietly and inoffensively, that they do not much disturb the Peace of *others* ; but there is no Man but who vainly disquiets *himself*.

Poor unhappy Creature that he should do so ! Are there not necessary and unavoidable Causes of Trouble sufficient, but he must needs add voluntary Afflictions to his heap of Misery, impose supernumerary Penances, disquiet himself, and that too in Vain, without Reason, and without Measure, to no End or Purpose ? 'Tis indeed a very deplorable Case ; but the consideration of all this will serve to teach us two very useful Lessons, To be more Humble, and to be more Wise.

First, *To be more Humble.* When Self begins to rise up in thee, and thou findest thy Soul tempted to Pride and Arrogance upon the Con-
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ceit of either Natural or Acquired Excellencies, then consider the vain Shew, the empty Apparition wherein Man walks, and the yet much vainer Disquiet wherewith he voluntarily afflicts himself. Take a View of thy *Picture*, of thy Natural and of thy Moral Vanity, and return to a juster Estimation, to a more sober and modest Account of thy self. Consider how vain thou art in thy Nature, and how much vainer thou art in thy Conduct, and then see what Ground or Foundation thou hast for Pride; which would ill become thee as a *Creature*, but much worse as such an infirm and ill-govern'd, as such a *doubly vain Creature*.

Secondly, *To be more Wise*. More Wise indeed, than to be thus needlessly troublesome to our selves; to walk about like restless and disturb'd *Ghosts*, and molest our own Ease and Quiet. For though we cannot help our Natural Vanity, that of walking in a vain Shew, yet we may in great measure help and prevent that which is Moral, our disquieting our selves in vain, and shall act very unaccountably to our selves, and be great enemies to our own Peace and Tranquility if we do not. We should think it a most intolerable Calamity, and that we had just Cause of Complaint, if we did suffer as much from others as we do from our selves, if they were as troublesome to us as we are to our own Souls. A House that is haunted and troubled with *Evil Spirits*, is look'd upon as a great Affliction, and so is a Mind that is tormented with perplex'd and uneasie

ease Thoughts. These are great Judgments, and severe Trials, when they are brought upon us by a superiour Hand : But are they the less so because inflicted upon us by our selves ? Or rather, does not this add to our *Misery* the Aggravation of *Folly* ?

In our Patience then let us *possess our Souls*, and be more Wise than to vex and torment them with vain and needless disquiets, considering, that sufficient to the short day of Life is the *Necessary* Evil thereof. But if our Heads must work, and we will be solicitous, let it be where our great Concern lies, and about what deserves our Care and Thoughtfulness, that is, so to order our Lives and Conversations while we are here, that we may be for ever Happy hereafter. To Fear God and Keep his Commandments, for that is the whole and only *Duty*, and ought therefore to be the whole and only *Concern* of Man.

G **A Dis**

*A Discourse shewing that the Law
is not made void through Faith.*

Being a Visitation Sermon Preach'd in the Cathedral Church of *Sarum* before the Right Reverend Father in God Gilbert Lord Bishop of *Sarum*, at his Visitation held there September 2. 1692.

ROM. iij. 31.

Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the Law.

TO have a right general Notion of the Gospel, of those Terms and Conditions upon which God dispenses Pardon and Salvation to the World in Jesus Christ; to understand how far it agrees with the Law, and how far it differs from it; in what respect it is an Abatement, and in what respect it is an Improvement of it, is a thing so very necessary to all Christians, especially to all Teachers and Professors of Christianity (as that without which no one particular Head or Point of Christian Divinity can either be rightly comprehended by themselves, or open'd and explain'd to others) that I need not question the
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Reasonableness of a Discourse upon such a Subject to such an Auditory, and upon such an Occasion.

I must confess, I do not much admire to have things of a *Controversial* Nature in Sermons whose business seems rather to lie in perswading and stirring up Men to the Practise of Piety and good Life, than in stating and deciding Questions. But whatever may be thought of the particular Controversies in Religion, many of which were perhaps better let alone than even *rightly* determin'd, sure the Notion of the Gospel in General, though a Notion, is yet so concerning and important a one (the whole Practice as well as Theory of Christianity depending upon it) that I cannot but presume that a clear and rational Account of this matter may be acceptable and serviceable from the *Pulpit* as from a *Divinity Chair*; especially in an Age, when not only the particular Points of the Christian Religion are corrupted, but the whole Design of it is mistaken, and its general Idea altogether perverted and misrepresented, by a sort of Men, who give such an Account of Christianity, as to overturn all *Morality*; and to explain the Gospel as wholly to evacuate the Law.

And since in behalf of this odd and abusive Account of Christianity, they alledge some single Passages out of St. Paul's *Epistles*, abstracted from the Scope and Occasion of them, I have the rather thought fit to confront it with a passage from the same Divine Writer. A passage that seems directly level'd against the *Solifidian* Hypothesis, and which

one would think should serve as a general Key to the Apostles meaning in all his Discourses about *Justification*, and wherein he seems to have laid in a Caution against all such gross misconstructions of it, as suppose him to dissolve the Force and Obligation of the Law by Preaching up the Faith of Christ. The very supposition of which extravagant Conceit, the Apostle here rejects with all the Indignation, and all the abhorrence imaginable: *Do we then make void the Law through Faith?* says he, *God forbid; yea, we establish the Law.*

The words consist of a *Question*, and an *Answer*. The Question is, whether the Law be made void through Faith? That is by the Gospel, or by that Account which the Apostle had given of the Gospel. To which the Answer is so far in the Negative, that 'tis said to be rather establish'd by it.

By *Law* here I suppose is meant truly and chiefly the *moral Law*. For *that Law* must be here asserted not to be made void, by which it was before asserted that Men are not Justified, this being the only pretence of suspicion that the Law is made void, because Men are supposed not to be Justify'd by it. *Do we then make void the Law,* says the Apostle. *Then,* as much as to say in virtue of the Conclusion we have now laid down, that Men are not Justified by the Deeds of it. That Law therefore which is here said not to be made void, must be one and the same with that whereby Men are said not to be Justified. Thus much is clear.

clear. But now what Law is that ? Is it not the Moral Law ? Yes, it is. For the Apostle is here treating not of the Justification of the *Jews* only, but also of the *Gentiles*. He is treating of Justification in *General*, and setting down the standing Terms upon which, not this or that Person or Nation, but Mankind in the *Lump* must expect to be justified. Now 'twould have been but a very empty Frigid Assertion to have said, that Mankind in general (which will comprehend Gentile as well as Jew) is not justify'd by the *Ceremonial* Law. For what has the *Gentile* to do with the Law of Ceremonies ? Or how could it be imagin'd that they should expect Justification by a Law which was never given to them, and by which they never were obliged ? That Law therefore by which all Men, the Gentile as well as the Jew, are here said not to be justified, must be some *Common* Law between them both, a Law of Universal Extent, and Unlimited Obligation. And what Law can this be but the *Moral* Law ? what other Law is common to all Mankind ? And that this is the Law here meant, is further plain from the Reason given why Men are not justified by it, namely, their present inability to keep it, which the Apostle concludes from the general Corruption and Immorality of Mankind. *For we have before proved*, ver. 9, says he, *both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under Sin*. Upon which occasion he quotes and applies a passage out of the Psalms, describing the general Corruption of Mankind. *As it is written, There is none Righteous, no*

not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one: Their Throat is an open Sepulcher, with their Tongues they have used Deceit, the Poison of Asps is under their Lips. Whose Mouth is full of Cursing and Bitterness: Their Feet are swift to shed Blood. Destruction and Misery are in their ways, and the way of Peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their Eyes. Which are all of them instances of Immoralities, or Transgressions against the Moral Law. Again, says he, Ver. 19. that every Mouth may be stopp'd, and all the World may become guilty before God. Which could not be in respect of the Ceremonial Law, because that did not oblige all the World, but only a little part of it; and that too for a little time. Therefore by the deeds of the Law, says he again, ver. 20. there shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of Sin. Which must necessarily be meant of the Moral Law, because of that impossibility of keeping it, which he had before spoken of, and illustrated by those instances of general Immorality, and which he again inculcates, by saying, that by the Law is the knowledge of Sin. And so again, All have sinn'd and come short of the Glory of God. Ver. 23. Which must needs be understood in respect of the Moral Law, there being no other Law by the transgressing of which all could sin and be guilty in the sight of God. From all which, it clearly appears, that the Law by which
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Men are here said not to be justified, is truly the *Moral Law*.

Those Learned Men who will have the Apostle, when he asserts that we are not justified by the Works of the Law, to be understood only of the *Ceremonial Law*, are led I presume into this Sense upon the Supposition, that not to be justified by the works of the *Moral Law*, would infer the nullity of that Law, and the non-necessity of those works, and so countenance the absurd conceits of *Antinomianism* and *Solifidianism*. But there is no need for such a Jealousie or such a Scruple; for the reason given by the Apostle why Men are not justified by the Law being their inability to keep it, their being all *concluded under Sin*, 'tis plain that when he affirms that they are not justified by the Works of the Law, by *Works* he means *Perfect Works*, or exact unsinning Obedience. They are not justified by the Law, that is, by their keeping the Law, and that because they do not, cannot keep it. Now not to be justified by the Works of the *Moral Law*, in this Sense, (meaning by Works, *Perfect Works*,) does by no means infer the nullity of that Law, or the unnecessary of those Works, as *Conditions* to Justification, but only the impossibility of *Perfect Obedience*, or living absolutely without Sin; I say, it does not infer a nullity of the *Moral Law*, as shall be made appear in the Process: But it does infer an *Appearance*, a Seemingness of such a thing, which is the ground upon which the Apostle raises this Objection here. Do we then make void

the Law, namely, because we say that Men are not justified by it? Does this infer its Nullity? So indeed it seems, but so it is not, as shall be shewn by and by. In the mean while, as we may safely as to the thing it self, so with respect to the coherence of this Chapter, we must necessarily conclude, that the Law by which Men are here said *not to be justified*, is truly the *Moral Law*, and consequently, that that also is the Law which is here said *not to be made void*.

Not that I would wholly exclude the Ceremonial Law from the compass of the Text, which in some respect may also be said not to be made void by Faith: But then we must change the sense of the Word *καταργῆσαι* here, which may signify either to abrogate as to the *Authority* and *Obligation*, or to render idle and insignificant as to the use and end of a Law. If by not making void here, you understand not abrogating as to the obliging part, then by Law here you must understand only the *Moral Law*, since the Ceremonial Law is on all hands acknowledged to be *thus* made void through Faith. But if by not making void, you will understand (as the Word *καταργῆσαι* will also bear) not rendring idle and insignificant as to the use and end, then by Law you may also understand the Ceremonial Law, for that is not so made void through Faith, as to be render'd an useless and insignificant Institution. Upon this acceptation of the Word *καταργῆσαι* the Ceremonial Law may here also be taken in, tho' if we regard the scope and coherence of the Apostle's

file's Discourse in this Chapter, I think 'tis very plain, that the Law which he here directly speaks of, and which he says is not made void through Faith, is the *Moral* Law. So much for what is meant by *Law* here. And that by *Faith* here, is meant the Doctrine of Faith, or the Gospel according as St. *Paul* had represented it, I think is very clear from the Context. The Words thus briefly stated, resolve into these Two Propositions.

1. That the Gospel does not make void the Law, meaning by Law (what I suppose the Apostle here principally does) the *Moral* Law.

2. That it is so far from making it null and void, that 'tis a real establishment of it.

1. That the Gospel does not make void the Law But before I shew that it does not, let us reflect a little with what detestation and abhorrence the Apostle rejects the contrary Supposition; *God forbid*, says he. God forbid indeed that the Moral Law which had not only God for its Author, (for so had the Ceremonial Law too) but was written with his own immediate Hand, and was a Transcript of his own Moral Nature, a Draught of the Essential and Eternal Truth, Reason and Order of God, that was calculated for the whole interest of a Rational Nature, so as to answer all the ends both of private and social Life, and withal so suited to the Moral *Taste* and *Palate* of a Rational Mind, that it cannot but be highly approved by it, even in its most depraved condition, and in the midst of all its Moral Disorders; (for even the very Animal Man, as we learn

learn from the Apostle, *Consents to the Law that it is good*;) Rom. 6. 17. God forbid I say, that that Law of the Lord which is an undefiled Law converting the Soul; that that Testimony of the Lord which is Sure, and giveth Wisdom unto the Simple; that those Statutes of the Lord which are Right and rejoyce the Heart; that that Commandment of the Lord which is pure, and giveth Light unto the Eyes, according to the account of the Psalmist: Psal. 19. Or that that Law which is Holy, and that Commandment which is Holy, Just and Good, according to the account of St. Paul, Rom. 7. 12. its supposed Adversary; God forbid that such a Law so accommodated both to the Welfare and to the Reason of Mankind, and that so strikes in with the common Sentiments as well as Interest of Human Nature, that it cannot but be ever and ever liked and approved by it; (for even those that sin against it, and are eternally punish'd for it, both the Wicked upon Earth, and the Damn'd in Hell, must and do consent to it, that it is good,) God forbid that such a Law should ever be null'd or made void.

But most of all, God forbid that it should be made void by the Gospel that great Mystery of Godliness, that Grace of God that has appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World: Tit. 2. 11, 12. By the Gospel, which the Angels publish'd with joy, as the greatest Blessing to Mankind, and which

which they still desire to look into, and contemplate as a mysterious mixture of Mercy and Justice, of Severity and Indulgence, which comes recommended to the World as a most perfect and noble Institution, both aiming at, and fitted for the highest exaltation of Human Nature, as a most excellent expedient for the promotion of Holiness and Happiness among Men, and as the last application of the Divine Physician for the Recovery and Restoration of a sinful and degenerate World; God forbid that such an Institution as this should make void the Law. What, shall that which is to reform the Lives and Manners of Men, take away that which is to be the Rule and Measure whereby they are to be governed? Shall that which is to be a general Blessing to the World, take away the *Natural* Instrument of all Civil Happiness? What, has the Gospel no other way to save Sinners but by killing the Law which condemns them? And shall the Author of it who was so zealous to fulfil all Righteousness, destroy that Law by his Death, which he was so careful to fulfil by the most exact obedience in his Life? Or if any of these things may be, yet is it to be imagined that God who had so tender a regard for the sacredness and honour of his Law, as not to admit of Sinners to pardon, without an infinite Satisfaction for the violation of it, and would therefore rather send his own Son to suffer Death, than that the dishonour done to his Law should not be repaired, that he should yet at the very same time intend to abolish that Law, the honour
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of which he was so severely vindicating, and by that very act too whereby he vindicated it? What, shall the Death of the Son of God, one of whose great ends was to *condemn Sin in the Flesh*, Rom. 8. 3. to shew forth God's infinite and irreconcilable displeasure against it, and to assert the Dignity of his broken Law, the honour of which could not consist with Impunity? Shall, I say, the Death of Christ which was to vindicate the Divine Law, abolish that very Law whose honour it was intended to vindicate? God forbid that any of these things should be true, or that the glorious Gospel of God should come attended with so many Prejudices and Objections, with such an odious, such a scandalous Retinue as this. How then shall it find entrance and entertainment in the World? Or how shall we expect to make Profelytes to it, among sensible and understanding Men either of the Jews or of the Gentiles? How shall we hope to gain upon either of these, by such a Gospel as this? Will it not rather lie open to the Prejudice of both, and be deservedly *to the Jews a Stumbling-block, and to the Greeks Foolishness*? 1 Cor. 1. 23. But thanks be to God, this is not the case (how fond soever some Men are it should be so) the Gospel is not such a lawless thing as some who would fain be so themselves imagin; nor does the Faith of Christ make void the Law, which I now come more directly and distinctly to shew.

But before I do so, I crave leave to lay down a necessary Distinction concerning both the Law
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and the Gospel, which will be of excellent use and service for our clearer proceeding, and for want of which the best Accounts that have been given concerning this matter, are generally so very tangled and confused.

I observe therefore, that the *Law* may be considered either as a *Rule* of Life and Conversation, or as a *Covenant* of Life and Death: And the same I note also in reference to the Gospel, that it may be considered either as a *Rule* of Life, or as a *Covenant* of Life and Death. This is the Distinction; the Reason and Use of it will appear in the Process of our Discourse.

Now this being premised, I say First, That the Law as 'tis taken for the *Ceremonial* Law, is indeed truly made void by the Gospel: As it never did oblige the Gentiles, so it does now no longer oblige the Jews, whose proper Institution it was, nor does it at all concern Christian Converts, so made either from Heathenism or Judaism; that is, it concerns no Body now, so as to oblige them to the observance of it, but is utterly void as to all Purposes of a *Law*, and so Dead and Buried, as never to rise again. And in this respect 'tis absolutely true, what the Apostle says, that *we are not under the Law, but under Grace*, Rom. 6. 14.

Not that we are to conceive that this is done by any formal and express *Repeal*; there is no need of any such thing: The Law of Rites and Ceremonies ceases of it self, the Bound or Term of its Obligation being run out and expired. For it was ordained as the Apostle tells us, *Gal. 3. 19.*
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till the promised Seed should come ; that is, Christ who in another place is said to be the *end of the Law*, Rom. 10. 4. as being typified and prefigured by it, and who therefore by his coming, without the formality of an express Repeal, puts a final period to it. I say, of an *express* Repeal ; for there is in the Gospel a *virtual* and *consequential* Repeal of the Law, the Gospel bringing into the World a new state of things, with which the Observation of the Law is not consistent. Particularly as to the *Priesthood* ; for by virtue of the Old Law, there was set up a special and peculiar state in the Jewish Commonwealth, which had a supream Priesthood Jurisdiction and Authority of its own : But now the Gospel introduces a new special State, and a Priesthood different from the former, having a Supream Jurisdiction over the whole World, and so is not consistent with the other State, and is therefore a Consequential Repeal of it : According to that Position of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *The Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law*, Heb. 7. 12.

Secondly, It must be allowed, that not only the Ceremonial, but even the *Moral Law*, so far as it is a *Covenant of Life and Death*, is made void by the Gospel ; that is, God does no longer require perfect and exact Obedience to the Moral Law, as the precise indispensable condition of Salvation. Require it he does as a *Duty*, as we shall farther see by and by, (otherwise the coming short of it would be no Sin,) but he does not exact

exact it as a *condition* of Life; so that though the Law continue in force as a *Rule*, yet 'tis abolish'd as a *Covenant*; abolish'd by the very nature and constitution of the Gospel, which exchanges Repentance for unfinning Obedience, as the condition of Salvation. Not but that the most exact Obedience is a *Duty* still, we owe Obedience to every Precept of the Moral Law as much as ever, and we sin in transgressing it; but it is now no longer the necessary condition of Salvation, so that the *Covenant* of Works is at an end, tho' the *Law* of Works continue still in its full force. For so

Thirdly, I find it necessary to affirm, that tho' not only the Ceremonial, but even the Moral Law, consider'd as a Covenant of Life and Death, is made void by the Gospel, yet the Gospel does not make void the Moral Law, as 'tis a *Rule* of Life and Manners. That the Moral Law thus consider'd, is not made void by the Gospel, I suppose to be the very point here intended by the Apostle, and that the proof of it may be the more orderly and distinct, it shall proceed according to this three-fold gradation.

1. That the Moral Law, as 'tis a *Rule* of Life and Manners, is not in it self *Abolishable*.

2. That suppose it might of it self be abolish'd, yet 'tis not possible that the Gospel should ever abolish it.

3. Supposing it were possible for the Gospel to abolish it, yet that *actually* and *de facto* it does not.

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Each of these Heads might easily afford matter for a particular Discourse, and perhaps can hardly be well discharged within a less compass; but speaking to an intelligent Audience, that by a few hints can think out the rest, I shall only briefly touch upon what is most considerable.

I. I say that the Moral Law as 'tis a Rule of Life and Manners, is not in it self *Abolishable*. Now for the demonstration of this, should I say that the Moral Law is no other than a Systeme of necessary and essential Order and Justice, Holiness and Virtue, Reason and Truth, and that 'tis indeed *Materially* considered no other than the very Essence of God, (who is Essential Truth and Reason,) and that the Love of this Essential Order, Justice, Reason and Truth, is no other than the Love of God, the very same thing with *Divine Charity*, and that therefore this Essential Order, &c. must be as necessary, as eternal, and as immutable as God himself is, who therefore can no more cancel or abolish either the whole or any part of it, than he can deny himself; I say, should I reason thus, I am sensible I should discourse very Abstractly, but yet I question not but that it would be upon sure and certain Principles.

However, to avoid the natural Prejudice that is in some Men against very *Metaphysical* Arguments, I shall chuse rather to remark, that the Moral Law was given by God, not as an Erector of a particular Society under peculiar Circumstances (which was the case of the Ceremonial Law) but as the Author of a *Rational Nature*, and

was therefore fitted to the interests of that Nature, and calculated for the whole state of Mankind, as consisting of such Precepts as were in themselves necessary to be observed in order to the private and publick Happiness of the World, according to the *Système* into which it is cast and fix'd by the great Author of Nature. For let the Moral World be cast into what *Système* you will, some Actions will result from it, that naturally make for its Beauty and Order, and others that tend as naturally to its disorder : Even as let the *Natural* World be according to what *System* you please, some certain *Motions* will be for its Corruption ; which by the way, is enough to silence all the Cavils of the *Leviathan* against the eternal and immutable Reasons of good and evil. Now I suppose the matter of the Moral Law to be such, that its Precepts carry a natural and necessary relation to the order and well-being of the World, according to the present *System* of it, and therefore must last as long as that *System* lasts ; for being accommodated to the condition of Human Nature in general, and not to the exigence of this or that particular Nation, Time or Place, it must continue as long as its Reason, Foundation and Measure does ; and if God will at any time dissolve such a Law as this, he must dissolve *Human Nature* too.

But *2dly*, Suppose the Moral Law to be of it self abolishable, yet 'tis not possible that the *Gospel* should ever abolish it. This I may argue from the nature of the *Gospel*, which is an Institution

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tution of the same Author, and that serves to the very same end, the Order and Happiness of the World, which can be obtained in no other way, and by no other means than by keeping up the distinction between *Virtue* and *Vice*, and by obliging Men to forbear the one and practice the other: That is in one word, by keeping up the *Moral Law*, which therefore 'tis impossible that the *Gospel* should ever abolish. The *Manichees* indeed that supposed the Law and the Gospel to come from Two contrary Principles, the one from a good God, and the other from an evil God, were consistent with themselves, in supposing the latter wholly to destroy the former. But supposing as we do and ought, that they both proceeded from the same God, and that God infinitely good, and that consequently could design nothing but the good of the World, which good is not attainable any other way, but by obliging Men to live according to the Rules of Virtue and Honesty, Piety and Religion, 'tis utterly impossible that upon this Supposition the Gospel should overturn the Moral Law, because in so doing, it would contradict and overturn it *self*, as pursuing the very same end, and which cannot be obtained but by the same means.

But besides, I have another more peculiar and less heeded reason to think, that 'tis impossible for the Gospel to abolish the Law, however otherwise in it self abolishable. The Apostle thought it absurd, to suppose that the Covenant made by God to *Abraham*, should be null'd by the Law, which

which was 430 Years after; *Gal. 3. 17.* now if 'twas impossible that the Promise should be voided by the Law, which was given so long after; then much more impossible is it that the Law should be voided by the Gospel, which was so long before it. But what, you'll say, was the Gospel before the Law? Yes, as to the reality of its effect, tho' not as to the solemnity of its Promulgation: For 'tis a great, tho' a popular mistake, to think that the Gospel commenc'd at the Appearance of the *Messias*. Then indeed was the full and final ratification and consummation of it, but the thing it self was long before, even ever since the Cessation of the Covenant of Works, which went no further than the Person of *Adam*, and expired at his Fall; immediately upon which the Gospel took place, and had thenceforward its constant effect, and Men were saved then as they are now, by Repentance and Faith in Christ, who is therefore said to be the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.* *Rev. 13. 8.* Indeed the Law as 'twas a Covenant of Life and Death, was not *after* the Gospel, but *before* it; but the Law as a Rule of Life given by *Moses*, that which we call the *Moral Law*, was after the Gospel. It was indeed before the Gospel was fully confirm'd and published, but it was after the Gospel had really taken place, and had had its real effects in the World. In this Sense the Gospel was before the Law; that is, the Gospel had its real effects before the Moral Law was given, and therefore even upon this

account 'tis impossible it should be able to abolish it.

But 3dly, Suppose it were possible for the Gospel to abolish the Law, yet this Supposition would do no great harm, so long as *actually* and *de facto* it does not: And that it does not, is most certain, for if it does, it must do it in one of these Two Capacities, either as 'tis it self a *New Law* or Rule of Life, or as 'tis a *New Covenant*. Not as 'tis it self a new Law, for so the Gospel obliges us to the same things, and makes all that our Duty which the Law did, with several additional Improvements; for which I appeal to our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount. It binds the very same Duties upon the World, only in higher degrees, and by more engaging Sanctions. 'Tis commonly said indeed, that the Law required perfect and exact Obedience, whereas the Gospel requires only *Sincerity*; but this Proposition must be well distinguished, before it be admitted. 'Tis true indeed, the Gospel as a Covenant of Life and Death, requires only Sincerity, as administering Pardon upon Repentance; but the Gospel as a Rule of Life, (in which respect it is called in Scripture *the Law of Faith*, Rom 3. 27.) requires more than Sincerity; it requires indeed the very same exactness of Obedience that the Law did, and what was our Duty before, is so still, for Pardon supposes Sin, and Sin necessarily supposes a contrary Obligation. The Gospel therefore thus consider'd, obliges to the same Duties that the Law did, and to the same degree of Obedience, and indeed

indeed is too much one and the same with it, to be a Discharge from it.

If therefore it does make void the Law, it must be in the other Capacity, as it is a new Covenant of Life and Death; and here indeed begin the *Abatements* of the Gospel, and this is that whereby it properly deserves that *Name*, as being a Message of good News to an impotent and depraved World, that were no more able to keep the Gospel as it is a meer *Rule of Life*, than they were to keep the *Law*. The Gospel therefore as a *Covenant*, is to come in and relieve those whom it would condemn as a *Rule*: But neither thus does it make void the Law. It does indeed thus consider'd, abate something of the Rigour of it, in allowing Pardon of Sin; but then at the same time it consults the honour, and keeps up the authority of it, in not dispensing this Pardon but upon the condition of *Repentance*. In that Sinners are admitted to Pardon by Repentance, the Law falls of its Rigor, but in that they are not admitted without Repentance, it preserves its Sacredness. The short is, the Gospel as it *accepts* Repentance, qualifies the severity of the Law, and as it *requires* Repentance, so it secures its Authority. But now that Repentance is the necessary and only condition of Pardon under the Gospel, and that notwithstanding the satisfaction of Christ (the effect of which is not to render it *needless*, but only *available*.) I suppose to be too plain in the Scripture, and too well known to those whom I now bespeak, to need any proof. I rather take

it for granted, as an acknowledg'd Principle, that the Gospel requires Repentance as the only condition of Pardon, and thence infer, that thereby it sufficiently provides for the authority of the Law, tho' at the same time it indulges Pardon to those who *repent* of their Transgressing it. So that you see the Gospel every way consider'd, even on this its *milder* side, is no evacuation of the Law; So far from that, that 'tis also

2. *A real establishment of it.* It establishes it all over, and to all real intents and purposes, and in every part of it, even in those very parts where it seems most to make it void. As first of all to begin with the Ceremonial part of the Law, tho' (as was acknowledged before) the Gospel evacuates all its power and efficacy, so that 'tis no longer of any force or obligation, either to Jew or Gentile, yet it does not make it an idle, useless, and insignificant Institution, (one proper sense of the Word *καταργησιν*) but is so far from that, that it perfects its Designs, and accomplishes its most retired Significations, in all things exchanging the shadow for the Substance; but more particularly by requiring that Purity of Heart, which was figured by the Rite of Circumcision, and by substituting the Sufferings of Christ in the room of the Legal Sacrifices. So that tho' it silences the *Obligation* of the Ritual Law, yet it establishes all the real *purport* and *intendment* of it.

Then *2dly*, as to the Moral Law considered as a Covenant of Life and Death, tho' the Gospel abolishes the Covenant of Works, yet it does at
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the same time and for the same reason greatly establish both the design and the effect of it. For as by *Requiring* Repentance, it secures the honour and authority of the Law, (as was remark'd before,) so by *accepting* Repentance, it promotes its good effect and success, and carries on its great end, Holiness of Life, which otherwise, (as the World now stands) could never be obtained. For the present Impotence of the World cannot bear so severe a Discipline, as that of the first Covenant, which since Men could not exactly keep, they would not care how much they did transgress. For what encouragement is there to set about such a thing as a good Life under a Law that is impossible to be kept, and that allows no room for Repentance where 'tis not kept? The most immediate consequence of this, is to make Men careless and desperate: But now the Gospel at once *requiring* and *accepting* Repentance, affords Men all the encouragement in the World, to repent and live well, since they cannot be pardoned, saved without it, and may with it; since 'tis neither a thing *superfluous*, nor in *vain* to *Repent*. And herein lies the *great Mystery of Godliness*, the Mysterious Contrivance of the Gospel, for the promotion of good Life, effecting that by its indulgence, which the Law could not do by its Rigor; according to that of the Psalmist, *There is Mercy with thee that thou mightest be feared*. So that when the whole account is cast up, the Law is rather a Gainer than a Loser by the lenity of the Gospel, by that Pardon which it indulges to Penitent

Offenders ; especially considering, that the possibility of this pardon upon Repentance, was procured by the Death and Satisfaction of Christ, whose alone Sufferings, were a greater Justification and Vindication of the Law, than all the Sins of the whole World were a desecration of it, and did it infinitely more Honour, than if Man had either exactly kept it, or eternally suffered for the violation of it : So greatly is the Law established by the Gospel, even in those Two parts of it, wherein it seems to have received the greatest Damage, *viz.* in respect of the *Ceremonial* part, and as 'tis a *Covenant* of Life and Death.

But *3dly*, 'Tis yet more established as 'tis a Rule of Life and Manners. Here the Gospel does more abundantly strengthen and confirm the Law, by repeating and renewing its Precepts, by giving them a fresh Promulgation, and stamping them with the impress of a greater Authority, by clearing and improving the sense and obligation of them, by adding to it new express Precepts of its own, such as that of Poverty of Spirit, Purity of Heart, the Love of Enemies, the Duties of Mortification and Self-denial, and the like ; and lastly, by enforcing both the old and new Precepts, by more powerful and awakening Sanctions, by better Promises, and by Severer Threatnings, and by a greater evidence and assurance of both, as bringing that Life and Immortality to light, which before was under great Darkness and Obscurity, and which either Men did not heartily and fully believe,

believe, or upon very uncertain and unsatisfying Principles. In all which respects, the Gospel is the greatest Establishment of the Law; Christ sustains and holds up the Hands of *Moses*, and *Christianity* is so far from being against *Morality*, that 'tis the greatest Improvement of it.

I have hitherto argued against the Voidance, and for the Establishment of the Law upon rational Principles, and in a more abstract way of Discourse; but if you would have a more *sensible* Argument, and that is more of a level with a popular Capacity, I consider, that to be sure Christ understood his own Religion (there is no doubt of that,) he knew the full extent of his undertaking for the World, and the utmost effect of his Death and Passion, and consequently how far we are freed by it from the obligation of the Law, and yet he tells us expressly, that he *came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, Mat. 5. 17. And accordingly to him that asked him what he should do to have Eternal Life, his answer was, *If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*, Mat. 19. 17. And again, to another that put him to the same question, says he, *What is written in the Law? How readest thou?* Luke 10. 26. You see he refers him to the Law, to that Old (and as some fancy *superannuated*) thing the Law, as that which was still in force, and necessary to be conscientiously kept and obey'd, in order to Eternal Life. So that if we will take an Idea of *Christianity* from him who best understood it, the Blessed Author of it, there is not that

that difference between that and *Morality*, which some imagin.

From the Measures laid down, we may now in few Words, form an exact Answer to that *great Question*, in giving an account of which, those that treat of it are generally so voluminous, and so intricate; namely, *How far the Gospel is an Abatement, and how far an Improvement of the Law?*

'Tis a gross mistake to think that the ease and advantage of Christianity consists in having any Abatements of *Moral Duty*; so far from that, that the Gospel as a Rule of Life is the severer Institution of the Two, as being a more perfect and excellent Law. The Abatement therefore does not lie here, in the Gospel consider'd as a Rule of Life, but in the Gospel consider'd as a *Covenant* of Life and Death, which abates just so much from the Rigor of the first Covenant, as Repentance is less than exact Obedience; which exact Obedience tho' the Gospel still exacts as a *Duty*, (for otherwise the coming short of it, would be no Sin,) yet it does not exact as the *Condition* of Eternal Life: So that in short, the Gospel as a Covenant, is an Abatement; as a Rule 'tis an Improvement of the Law. But in neither Sense an Evacuation, but rather an Establishment of it.

I shall now in short, make a practical Application of what has been discours'd, which I shall direct,

First, To all Christians in general.

Secondly,

Secondly, To the Publick Professors and Teachers of Christianity.

First, To all Christians in general. That since the Faith of Christ does not make void, but rather establish the Law, they would take care how they entertain such a notion of Christianity, as to think it a *Charta of Licentiousness*, and a Discharge from the Duties of Morality; that they would not look upon themselves as Exempt and Priviledg'd Persons, above Law and Obligation, but as Persons under a very strict and severe Institution, that requires all Purity of Heart, and Holiness of Life. That they would not flatter themselves with fond conceits of God's particular Favour to their *Persons*, without respect to their *Lives*, nor trust to an empty and notional Faith in Christ, but rather apply themselves to live in Obedience to his Commands, and to walk as becomes his Gospel. That as they are zealous in standing fast in that *Liberty* wherein Christ has really made them free, so they would shew the same Zeal in standing fast in the *Duty*, and those Moral Obligations wherein Christ has left them *bound*; yea, and has bound faster upon them, ever remembring that of the Author to the *Hebrews* concerning Christ; that he is *become the Author of Eternal Salvation*; not to those that apprehend him, apply him, close with him, and roll upon him (according to the unscriptural and unintelligible Cant of some Men's Divinity,) but to those that Obey him, Heb. 5. 9.

Secondly,

Secondly, That which hence offers it as applicable to all the Publick Professors and Teachers of Christianity is this, that they would make it their Endeavour in the First place, to form in their own Minds a clear and distinct Notion concerning Christianity in general, and the terms of the New Covenant. That they would get a right general Idea of the Gospel, what it is in it self, and how it differs from the Law; what are its Abatements, and what its Improvements.

And after they have duly inform'd themselves, that they would make it their next great care to instruct those committed to their charge in this so weighty and fundamental a Point of Divinity. As for the *particular* Disputes of Religion, I think 'tis no great matter how little common People are troubled with them; but sure there cannot be too much care taken in making them understand the general nature and design of Christianity, and the true difference between the Law and the Gospel, the Old Covenant and the New, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. And lest the Indulgence which the *Latter*, even in its very *Name* imports, should raise in them a false Idea of Licentiousness, great care should be taken so to state and explain the *Grace* of the Gospel, that it may not make void the Moral Duties of the Law, and to press and inculcate the necessity of Repentance and good Life, as that which the Gospel both *commands* as a *Duty*, and *requires* as the necessary indispensable *Condition* of Pardon and Salvation.

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The empty notional way of Preaching up the Doctrins of Faith in Christ, Justification by Faith only, Free Grace, Christian Liberty, and Imputed Righteousness, as 'twas in use in the late times, and is still among the Men of that Stamp, has done a great deal of Mischief in this Kingdom, and has had (I doubt not) an ill effect upon the Lives of Men, and contributing as much as any one thing to the unmoralizing and debauching the Age. And as it has been of an ill influence *within* our selves, so I doubt not but that it has done as much mischief *without* too, and has been a general pre-

De causis Incredulitatis Judaorum.
Pag. 437.

judice to the Interest of *Christianity*. The Learned *Episcopus* (I remember) reckons it as one of the Bars to the *Jews* Conversion ; to which I add, and to the Heathens too : For what advantage would either Jew or Gentile gain by embracing Christianity, if they must part with their Morality in the Exchange ? This certainly is the most proper and obvious sense, *to make void the Law through Faith*. For if good Works are not necessary as the condition of my Pardon and Justification, for what are they necessary ? And if they are not necessary at all, what reason has any Man to trouble himself about them ?

I shall not at present ingage in that long nauseous Dispute about *Justification*, but shall rather offer such a Remark, as may quickly put an end to it. I consider therefore, that without all question our Justification in this Life must proceed by

by the very same Measures that it will do at the last Day, when we shall publicly receive it from the Mouth of our Judge. But then I think the great Question will be, how we have *Lived*, and what we have *done* in the Body, whether Good or Bad; and as we shall be able to answer to this Question, so we shall be either finally *Justified* or *Condemn'd*. He therefore Preaches Christ best, that insists most upon the necessity of Obedience to his Commands; and he makes the best *Christians*, that makes the best *Men*; and then is the Gospel most truly represented, when it is so set forth, as to be an Establishment of the *Law*.

Now to God the Father, &c.

*A Discourse concerning the Origin
and the Relief of all Trouble and
Uneasiness of Mind.*

PSAL. xciv. 19.

*In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy
Comforts delight my Soul.*

AND 'tis well for the Soul of Man, that she has Divine Comforts to take hold of for her Support, when all Human and Worldly Satisfaction

tisfactions fail, that she can delight and solace her self in God, when weary of her self and of her own Thoughts, and can fix and repose the whole endeavour of her Being, upon a firm and immoveable Center, when no longer able to sustain the weight of her own Desire. For were it not for this great *Sanctuary* of Human Nature, that Power of Thinking, which we value as the Priviledge of Man, would be to him an Instrument of the greatest Torment and Misery; the Wise Man might deservedly envy the happiness of the Fool, and a *Beast* that grazes in the Field, would be in a better condition than *both*.

Indeed our Thoughts are the occasion of much Trouble to us, as well as Delight; and as all Honour is attended with its proper Burthen, that which is the Priviledge of our Nature, is often the Instrument of our Disquiet, and our great Exaltation above the Beasts, makes us liable to several uneasinesses, from which the lowness of their Condition exempts them. They feel only the weight of *Present Evil*, and of Present Evils, the only one that they labour under, is *Pain*, (for I think 'twould be too great a Concession of Reason in them, to allow them capable of Grief of *Mind*;) and in *Pain*, all that they indure, is the direct impression, without adding to their Misery, by making impatient Reflections upon what they suffer. Whereas Man by the Advantage shall I say, or by the Misfortune of a quicker and more active Sense, torments himself both with troublesome Reflections upon what *has* been, and

and with jealous Apprehensions and Expectations of what *may* be, and so feels Evils when they are past and gone, and when they are present ; and is besides liable to Grief of Mind, as well as to Bodily Pain, and is withal so unkind to himself, as to aggravate both these by close Reflections and passionate Applications of Spirit. So severe is the Tax that Nature charges upon Man for his Priviledge above the Beasts.

And as this is the case of *Man* in respect of *Brute* Creatures, so in proportion, the same is also the case of *Wise* Men with respect to *Fools* and Persons of less Discernment. 'Tis a thing of common Observation and Experience, that Thinking and Contemplative Men, are very apt to be Melancholy ; to which agrees that Reflection of the Wise Preacher, *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increases Knowledge, increases Sorrow*, Eccl. 1. 18. And there is a very satisfying Account to be given of this : The Foundation of that Content and Complacency we take in the things of this World, is Error and Mistake, (for 'tis impossible that vain things consider'd as vain, should please) and both our love to the World, and our delight in it, are purely owing to our ignorance of its Vanity : But now Wisdom discovers to us the Vanity of the World, gives a Man a lively and convincing sense of it, and so makes him incapable of relishing its mean Enjoyments. The Wiser a Man grows, the harder he will be to be pleased, and the fewer things he will delight in ; and we find that in every
Stage

Stage of our Life, as our Years and Thoughts ripen and improve, we cast away several Diversions as inspid to our maturer Sentiments, which before when we thought and understood less, afforded us great entertainment. That will serve to divert the Mind of a Fool, which will hardly ingage the *Notice* of a Wise Man; and the former will laugh extravagantly at that which from the later will hardly draw a Smile. The truth is, we out-grow our *Pleasures* as we do our *Cloaths*, and the Objects of our Delight and Complacency, lessen and decrease, as we improve in Reason and Experience, which by discovering to us more and more of the World's Vanity, makes us more and more Dead to it, and out of Love with it.

It does so; but in the mean while, what are we Gainers by the Bargain? We are indeed awaken'd, but 'tis from a pleasant Dream; our Eyes are opened, but 'tis to discern our *Nakedness*; we are wise to our own Cost, and are by our greater *Knowledge* robb'd of our *Content*. That which prop'd up and sustained our Souls before, now fails and sinks under us, and leaves us longing and reaching, and with pain hanging in a vast Emptiness. And what a strange fall of the Soul must this be, when all her Worldly Props and Stays are taken away under her, and she has nothing left to repose her self on, and take Pleasure in! What a horrible Hunger, what a Deprivation, what a Poverty, what a Desolation, what a dismal Solitude, what an Annihilation

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must

must there needs insue, something like that of *Death*, which breaks off all the ties of the Soul to the Creation, and separates her from all delightful intercourse, with sensible Objects! And what a miserable state of Barrenness and Privation must this be, and what shall the Thoughtful and Contemplative Man do in such a wild Emptiness? The whole Creation fails and sinks under him, and he is not able to be his own Center, he must then sink down too into the depths of Sorrow and Despair, without Remedy or Hope of it, and be of all the Creatures upon the Earth the most miserable (and that for no other fault, but for being more Wise and Discerning.) Were it not that there is a God to supply the defect of the Creature, were it not that he could rest the weight of his Soul upon him, when his other Props are withdrawn from him, were it not that he could take Sanctuary in the Divine Fullness, when his more intent Thoughts have utterly convinc'd him of the World's Emptiness, and were able to say here with the Psalmist, *In the multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

We have in the words the *Original* and the *Cure* of all the Sadness and Melancholy that is in the World. The Original of all Human Sorrow is our own Thoughtfulness, or the multitude of our Thoughts. The Cure and Remedy for this, is the Consolation of God, or the Divine Comforts; for, *In the multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul*; wherein the

the Psalmist may be supposed to speak to this effect, When my Blood and Spirits, those Natural Springs of the Soul, are strongly touch'd and mightily set on work by sensible Impressions, and my Mind by reason of their quick and various Motion, sallies out into a multitude of Thoughts; and when those Thoughts make me sad and heavy, anxious and solicitous, as presenting to my view my own weakness and infirmity, and the universal vanity of all those seeming Props and Stays upon which my deluded Soul was apt to lean, the many great Calamities of *Life*, and the much greater Terrors of *Death*, the known Miseries of the *Present State*, and the Darkness and uncertainty of the *Future*, still urging me with fresh Arguments of Sorrow, and opening new and new Scenes of Melancholy, till my Soul begins to faint and sink under the Burthen she has laid upon herself: When I am thus *Thoughtful*, and thus *Sorrowful*, have thought my self into a pensive frame of Spirit, and looked so long against the Light, as to darken and benight my Mind, then it is O my God, that I feel the relief of thy Divine Refreshments, and find my self supported and born up by the strong Tide of thy Suavities and Consolations, and revived by fresh Incomes of *Life*, which raise up my drooping Head, strike a Light in my Soul, and make me not only *dismiss*, but even *forget* that Sorrow and Melancholy which my Thoughtfulness had brought upon me. So that here are two great and very important Concernments of Man pointed out and describ'd, the

true Cause, and the only Remedy of all his Sorrow; The Cause within himself, his own Thoughts; the Remedy in God, the Divine Comforts.

And first, to begin with the Cause of Human Sorrow, our own Thoughtfulness, or the Multitude of our Thoughts within us. But here it is first of all supposed, that Man is a Thoughtful Creature, and has a multitude of Thoughts that pass within him; and so indeed he has: Thoughtfulness is inseparable at least from a waking Soul, 'tis at once the Privilege and the Disease of it, and there is no Man but who thinks a great deal, tho' there be but a very few that think to any great purpose. The Spirit of Man is called in Scripture, *The Candle of the Lord*, and this Candle always burns, and flames and shines. It may well be compared to a Luminary, being a most active, restless Principle, and that is in such an high and constant Ferment, that to stop its Motion, you must extinguish its Light; for as long as this Candle is *alive*, it will burn and flame, and cast a Sphere of Light about it; for Thought rises upon Thought, and Desire upon Desire, Hope after Hope, and Fear after Fear, and these follow one another in an endless chase, so imitating the rapid course and agitation, and the constant flux and succession of a *Flame*.

And this is no other than the Natural result of the make and frame of Man. For since to the Power and Capacity of Thinking, Man has added an actual inclination to *Happiness*, 'tis but necessary that this his Inclination to Happiness should

set his Thoughts on work, and imploy them in contriving means whereby this Happiness may be attained. Hang but a weight upon a Clock that has the due inward composure of Springs and Wheels, and it will immediately put it into Motion. Now the Power and Capacity of Thinking in Man, answers to the inner Composure of the Clock, these are the Intellectual Springs and Wheels, and the inclination to Happiness answers to the Weight that is hanged on it, and gives it actual motion. So that the general desire of Happiness being added to a Creature that has already all the Power and Capacity of Thinking, makes him think actually after the same manner, as the weight upon a Clock, whose Springs and Wheels are duly order'd and disposed for motion, immediately sets it a going. Here is the first Principle of all that infinite motion that is in the Soul of Man, it all derives it self from this one Fountain, the general desire of Happiness; were it not for which, there would be an universal Rest and Silence throughout the Soul, the intellectual frame would stand still, as a Clock does when its Weights are taken off: But as long as this Weight presses, the Motion continues. For indeed the general desire of Happiness is the proper weight of the Soul, the great *Arterial Pulse* of Human Nature, that awakens and stirs up its Dormant Powers, and quickens the whole Rational frame into Life and Motion.

And accordingly if we reflect upon what passes within our selves, we shall find that all those in-

finite workings of the Soul, those innumerable Thoughts, Imaginations, Remembrances, Willings, Hatings, Desirings and Aversations, Hopes, Fears, Joys and Sorrows that cross and cut one another in endless *Rencounters* ; in a Word, that the whole motion of the Soul is nothing else but one general Concern, one various *Thought* about Happiness: This is the Result of all that passes within the Soul, hither all her Motions and Operations tends, which is a plain sign that 'tis this that first sets her on work, and is the principle of all her Motion. And indeed how can it otherwise be, but that the desire of Happiness which is the natural Bias of every Soul, should beget and excite in us a Thoughtfulness concerning it, and the Means whereby it may be attained ?

But altho' our Thoughts take their first and necessary Rise from the natural desire of Happiness, as a Clock does its motion from the weight that hangs on it, yet so far do they degenerate from their *Original*, as to be themselves the cause of all our Misery. For the whole Misery of Man is resolvable into *Pain* and *Grief*, and both these are caused by our Thoughts. As for *Pain*, 'tis certain that 'tis the Soul alone that feels it, (as being the true seat of all Sensation,) and that 'tis by its *Thoughtfulness* that it does so ; for indeed Pain it self is nothing else but a disagreeable Modification of the Soul, an *uneasie Thought* occasioned by some outward Bodily impression : But that is only the remote occasion, 'tis to our Thinking that we directly owe all our Pain. For let the impression made

made upon the Body be never so dolorifick or apt to excite Pain, yet if you will suppose the Soul either not to think at all, or to have its Attention wholly withdrawn from the supposed impression, and intirely fix'd and ingaged upon some other Object, there will be no such thing as that troublesome sensation we call *Pain*; as by experience we find in Men that either are in a deep Sleep that wholly *silences* their Thoughts, or in a Trance or Extasie that strongly *diverts* them. Accordingly we have Two Methods of dealing with Men in Pain, either by casting them into a deep Sleep or Stupor, or by what we call *Divertisement*; by which it clearly appears, that our Thinking is the true cause of all our Pain. As it is also

Secondly, Of all our *Grief* 'Tis I confess strange, that the Soul of Man which so infinitely loves it self, and whose whole Inclination is to *Happiness*, should be its own Tormentor; and yet 'tis most certain, that all those innumerable Troubles and Disquiets whereby her natural Rest and Tranquility is broken and disturb'd, arise from her own Thoughts. As these will be the Hell of Wicked Spirits hereafter, so they are the present Rack and Affliction of the Soul here, and all the uneasiness that she either feels and complains of in her self, or pities in others, is derived from them. For indeed our Joy and our Grief as contrary as they are, both in themselves, and in their effects, proceed from one and the same general Principle and are like Two *Grafts* of a contrary kind that grow upon one and the same *Stock*; they are both
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born within our selves, and proceed from our *Thoughts*.

From whence else should our Grief proceed? It cannot come from any thing *without* the Soul, for that which is without the Soul, cannot act upon it, consequently cannot any wise affect it, and consequently cannot grieve or punish it. It must be therefore from something *within* the Soul, and what can that be, but her own *Thoughts*? These therefore are the Instruments of her Disquiet; nothing of all that is either thought, said or done in the World, can have any direct and immediate influence upon my Soul; she can only suffer by her own Thoughts. The Thoughts of other Men may indeed impress certain Motions upon their *own Bodies*, and those Motions may be communicated to *other Bodies*, and this may work a change in external Nature; but what is all this to *my Mind*? And so again the Words and Actions of Men, may make an alteration either in the Political or the Natural state of things, but still how is *my Mind* concern'd in all this, any otherwise than as she is pleas'd to interest her self in it, and to take an occasion from this to vex and afflict her self by her own Thought, by those uneasie Reflections she passes upon either the *Motions* of the *Natural*, or the *Events* of the *Moral* World. This is that which truly wounds and pierces her, all other things drop short and cannot reach her.

But to let in a little more light upon this, by an *Instance*; Suppose I hear of some ill Report con-

concerning me, something spoken to my disadvantage ; 'tis most certain that this is a thing wholly without me, and intirely separated from me, and therefore of it self can have no manner of effect upon me, so as to make me really better or worse, more happy or more miserable ; how comes it to pass then, that I am troubled at such a Report ? What does the Report do to me, or upon me ? Does it of it self immediately and directly wound or hurt my Soul ? No, it does not so much as touch it, as being altogether without it, and separate from it. How then come I to be disturb'd about it, but only because tho' that be really separate from me, yet my Soul fantasticaly joins with it, and by a false imagination, takes it for a real evil, and so disturbs herself with her own Fancy. The thing in it self can be no real evil to my Soul, because 'tis without me, and I am not really the worse for it ; but I give it the Appearance of an evil, and make an *imaginary union* with it in my own fancy, and so vex and discompose my self : So that 'tis not the ill Report that goes concerning me, but my *Fantastical Opinion* about it, that gives the Trouble and the Disturbance. And the like may be conceived in all other cases. We may lay the Blame, and we generally do, upon things without, upon this or that Affront, or this or that cross Accident, but upon due examination it will be found, that we must come nearer home for the Authors of our Discontent, and that they that trouble us are of our own Family, and
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are no other than our own Thoughts. So that now if a Man should put himself that Question of the Psalmist, *Why art thou so troubled, O my Soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me?* The Answer is ready, thy Trouble is from thy self, they are thy own Thoughts that disquiet thee.

And having thus opened the true Fountain of all our grief and uneasiness, I come now to apply the *Remedy*, which we need not go far to seek, since the very next Clause of the Text directs us to it. And 'tis a Remedy that is as near us as the Disease, *for in the multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.* When my own Thoughts trouble and discompose me, then thy Comforts refresh and relieve me. So that the Divine Comforts are the proper Cure and Remedy of all that Sadness and discomposure of Mind, which is occasion'd by our own Thoughts : The *Divine Comforts* ; by which I suppose we may aptly enough understand these three things :

1. The Chearing and Refreshing Influences of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Joys and Satisfactions of Devotion, and a Religious Life.
3. The Considerations of the Nature and Perfections of God.

All these I think may very properly come within the notion of *Divine Comforts*, as being either such as proceed directly from God, or which result from the Service we do to him, or which spring

spring from the Thoughts and Contemplations we exercise about him. These are indeed very Divine Comforts, and such as will not fail to give us ease and refreshment under the most cleaving and tormenting Troubles our Thoughts can inflict upon us.

As First of all, to begin with the first kind of Divine Comforts, the chearing and refreshing Influences of the Holy Spirit, who in Scripture is emphatically stiled *the Comforter*; John 15. 26. Gal. 5. 22. and one of whose principal and immediate Fruits is Joy. We have no reason to think any trouble of our Minds so great, but what these Comforts of God will be able to allay: For this is that Divine Consolation, that internal and unexpressible Sweetness and Delectation, that Mystical Unction, that Spiritual Taste, that Intellectual Savour, that Refectory Grace, that inebriating Wine, that extatical Joy of the Holy Ghost; in a word, that Peace of God which passes all Understanding, and that blessed anticipation of Heavenly Delights, which has so fill'd, overflow'd and ravish'd some holy Souls, as to raise them above the World and themselves too, to make them quite insensible of all Pain and Sorrow, and to despise all the Good and all the Evil of this Life. Of this some solitary and contemplative Persons have *spoken* very high and great things; and others of less Thought, but more Piety and Devotion, have *felt* greater: Witness that strange and otherwise unaccountable Appearance; the chearful and serene

rene Behaviour of several old *Martyrs* in the midst of the Flames, who were so far from expressing any Impatience in their *Fiery Tryals*, that they were not so much as sensible of any *Pain*. We cannot here suppose that the Power of God miraculously restrain'd that of the Fire, (as in the case of the Three Children,) because it had its usual Effect upon their Bodies; nor have we any need to suppose that the ordinary Law of Communication between such certain Motions upon the Body, and such sensations in the Soul, was by the Power of God miraculously interrupted; No, the account of this matter will be more simple; and consequently more probable to suppose, that the Holy Spirit of God (the great *Comforter*) did diffuse such a Divine Sweetness through the Souls of those happy Sufferers (if those that felt nothing may be so called,) as either so withdrew their Attention from the Impressions made upon them, that they had no such thing as any dolorous Sensation, or so temper'd and qualified it, or rather out-weigh'd it by a stronger sentiment of *Pleasure*, that it was not in the least uneasy to them; that is, in one word, it either *hinder'd* it, or *overcame* it. To such an high degree are the Divine Consolations able to delight the Soul, when God is pleas'd more liberally to dispense them. Of these the Psalmist may be supposed to speak, when he says, *Psal. 23. The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green Pasture, and lead me forth beside the Waters of Comfort; Yea, tho' I walk through*
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the Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff shall comfort me. It seems in the strength of these Heavenly Refreshments, he could tread the most dismal and uncomfortable Path the Feet of Man can ever walk in, the *Valley of the shadow of Death*, without any concern or trouble. And indeed one Beam of this Divine Consolation, would strike a light into the shades below; brighten the Minds of the Infernal Spirits, and make even the Damn'd in Hell forget their Miseries. But these Divine Comforts being more rare and extraordinary, and such as are not so much at our own Disposal, as being immediate Communications of God, I shall proceed to those that are more within our own Power, and therefore hasten to consider,

2. The Joys and Satisfactions of Devotion, and a Religious Life: By which may be understood either that Pleasure wherewith a good Man *does* his Duty, performs acts of Piety and Religion, or that Pleasure wherewith he reflects upon it when done. The former is the pleasure of the *Action*, the latter is the pleasure of the *Review*, and is the same with what we call the Comfort of a good *Conscience*; and both these are very great and strong Pleasures, far beyond those of Sense, which so captivate and enslave Mankind. 'Tis first a great Pleasure for a Man to do his Duty; he is then in a most natural state and order, and upon his most natural state and order, and upon his most natural Employment, doing that

that which best becomes him, is most perfective of his true self, and most suitable to the original Genius and Constitution of his Soul; which is then well in *Tune*, and in a right state of *Health*, from which Pleasure is always inseparable. And so Secondly, 'tis a great Pleasure for a Man to reflect upon his Duty done; 'tis to consider and recollect with himself, that he has made a right use of his Powers and Faculties; that he has acted as he ought, and lived according to the Order and Perfection of his Nature, and that thereby he has engaged the best and greatest Being on his side, made God his Friend, and secured his main Point, the Interest of his Soul to all Eternity; than which, what can be a more pleasing and more satisfying consideration? Of the former Pleasure, that of doing acts of Religion, we may form a general conjecture from what the Psalmist says of one of them in particular, *My soul shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praises thee with joyful lips*, Psal. 63. 6. The Figure is strangely bold, and the Expression strong and flaming, importing a sort of Spiritual Luxury, an intellectual Sensuality in the Service of God. Of the latter pleasure, that of reflecting upon our Duty performed, we may take an account from that of Solomon, Prov. 14. 14. *A good man shall be satisfied from himself*; and from that of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 1. 12. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.* And

'tis considerable that he speaks it after an account of some very extraordinary Troubles that came upon him in *Asia*, and makes this very thing to be that which supported him under them, and to be the very Comfort and Consolation of God. For says he, *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.* Then a little after, *For we would not Brethren have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above strength, inso-much that we despaired of life. But we had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raises the dead; who deliver'd us from so great a death.* Then a little after adds, as expressing the manner and means of his Deliverance, *For our rejoycing is this, the testimony of our conscience, &c.* This it seems was the Comfort whereby he was comforted of God, and which held him up under, or rather *above his trouble.* Here then is another Remedy of Grief, another Sanctuary for a troubled and disconsolate Soul. When Thoughts arise in thy Heart, and Troubles from those Thoughts, when thy Mind is dark and cloudy, and all the Regions of thy Soul are overcast, then betake thy self to thy *Oratory*, either to thy *Closet*, or to the *Church*, and entertain thy Soul with the Pleasures of Religion, and the Satisfactions of a clear Con-

Conscience; which will at least divert, if not wholly deliver thee from thy trouble : So that in this sense also thou shalt find the Service of God to be *perfect Freedom*. But in case thy trouble be very obstinate and difficult to be turn'd out of its course, then make use of the last and most efficacious Remedy, and apply thy self,

3. To the consideration of the Nature and Perfections of God. The Psalmist had often tried this Expedient, and as often found the success of it, and therefore as one convinc'd and satisfied of its efficacy, says he, *When I am in heaviness, I will think upon God*, Psal. 77. 3. This indeed is a most comfortable Contemplation to a Mind that shall be duly disposed for it, and such as will either remove or swallow up all the disquiet that other Considerations can bring upon us, all the Trouble that can arise from the whole compass of Thought.

As for Instance, when in the multitude of my Thoughts within me, I happen to fall into that *Cartesian* Doubt and Perplexity, that it may be there is an infinitely Powerful, Envious, Subtle and Crafty Being, that makes it his business to put Cheats and Fallacies upon me ; and that it may be, I am so made and constituted in my natural frame, as to be then most deceived, when I apprehend and conceive things most clearly and distinctly, and consequently that there is no such thing as *Truth, Knowledge or Certainty* to be had ; then I consult and contemplate the Idea and Nature of God, which I find to include infinite Perfection,

fection, wherein is also included Goodness, Truth and Veracity; whence I collect, that he is a Being infinitely Good, and infinitely True, and the Fountain of all Light and Knowledge, and that therefore he can no more be the Author of an Error in me, than he can be subject to any in himself; which presently puts an end to this Scruple.

Again, When my Thoughts represent to me in my Retirements, a true Idea of this World, and of the whole state of Man in it, that they are both of them extremely vain, yea, *altogether Vanity*; when I consider the utter Emptiness, Nullity and Disappointment of all Worldly Fruition, and am troubled to see the many little props and stays of my Soul upon which I formerly rely'd, to yield to my Weight, and sink away so fast under me, and not only so, but am thence drawn into a Melancholy Suspicion that it may be this is the nature of *all fruition*, and that it will be so in the other state too, when I come to enjoy it, and so begin to have the same doubt now concerning *Good*, which, I had before concerning *Truth*; I say, when my Thoughts have cast me into this damp and perplexity, then I turn the stream of them another way, and meditate upon the infinite Richness, Fulness and All-sufficiency of God, that *Centrality* of the Divine Nature, whereby he is fully satisfied in himself, and capable of being an object of Acquiescence to as many as shall have the fruition of him; which one thing duly consider'd, will both sup-
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port me under the thought of the *present* World's Vanity; and ease me of all Suspicions concerning the *next*.

Again, When in my more melancholly and gloomy Hours, among the multitude of my sadder Thoughts, this is one, that Men are not dealt with according to their Works good or evil, but that there are more *hidden* Causes of Mens eternal Conditions, that some are from all Eternity mark'd out for Ruin by the absolute Will of God, and that I my self am one of those miserable Reprobates, absolutely rejected from *Grace* and *Glory*; when this black Thought begins to o'recast my Soul, and draw over it a Veil of Darkness and Despair, then I consider the breadth and length, the depth and height of the Goodness of God, and that Love of his that passes Knowledge, how Great and Generous a Being he is, how slow to Anger, and how abundant in Goodness and Truth, how infinitely remov'd from Envy, Malice, Prejudice and all straitness of Mind, and all those little illiberal Passions which make up what we call *Ill Nature*; which while I seriously and attentively consider, I find my darken'd Soul begin to break out of her Eclipse, to dismiss all her Jealous Apprehensions of God, and her Fears concerning her self, being no longer able to suspect such harsh and arbitrary Proceedings from so Great, so Good, and so Just a Being.

And so again, to instance once more, Whenever my Mind is anxious and solicitous about the
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great Power and Malice of *Evil Spirits*, so as to be afraid what they may do to me while I am in this World, but more especially when separated from the Body, I shall enter into their more peculiar Territories, into the World of Spirits: When I am in a thoughtful concern what shall then become of me, and who will then take charge of me, that I may not be either seiz'd and caught up by those to whom I do not belong, whose Portion I am not, or wander and be lost in those unknown Regions, and among those numberless troops of Spirits, (*for what is my Soul in such a multitude of Creatures?*) then I set my self to consider the Power, the Wisdom and the Providence of God, who has set inviolable Laws and Measures to both Worlds, and disposes of all things sweetly, according to those Laws; who has given his Angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways, and whose Goodness and Justice oblige him to take care of all those in the next World, who truly and faithfully serve him in this. I recollect again with the Psalmist, that *the Lord is my Shepherd*, and therefore, *tho' I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff shall comfort me.*

And thus is the Consideration of God improveable to the ease and quiet of our Minds, under the several uneasie Sentiments that may discompose them. Nor is it only a Remedy against the Pain of our many Thoughts, but even against the very *multitude* of them too; for multitude

of Thoughts, is from multitude of Desires. As we think in general, because we desire, so the more things we desire, the more we shall think of. Here then is the head of all our distraction; we think and are troubled about many things, because our desire is divided among many Objects; and how comes our Desires to be so divided, but only because the *Creatures* are the Object of them. The proper Remedy then for this, will be to apply our Minds to the Contemplation of God, and the more we contemplate him, the more we shall love and desire him, and the more we desire him, the more our Thoughts will center on him; and this will recollect and *simplify* our Souls, and free us of that distraction of Mind, that dispersion of Thought which is so great an hindrance to us in the course of our *Studies*, in the management of our *Affairs*, but most of all in the Offices of our *Devotion*.

And thus have I pointed out both the Origin and the Cure of all Human Trouble, and shewn how in the multitude of our Thoughts within us the Divine Comforts do delight our Souls. And 'tis they only that can do it; miserable are all other Comforters, and vain is all the Comfort that they administer. Neither Philosophick Discourses, nor the common Arts of Diversion, Musick, Dancing, Drinking or Gaming, can afford any great or long Relief to a troubled Spirit, its weight will soon make way through these flight things, and indeed will never find a stay strong enough to bear it up, till it repose it self upon

upon the Divine Comforts. After all Experiments, its last Sanctuary must be in *God and Religion.*

The Consideration of what has been hitherto discours'd, will now lead us to a double Reflection, one upon the Condition of wicked Men in this World, and the other upon the Condition of damn'd Souls in the World to come.

And First as to the Condition of wicked Men in this World. If the Divine Comforts are the proper and only Cure for all the Trouble; occasion'd by our Thoughts, then we must conclude the Condition of all such Men to be very miserable: For as their Thoughts are apt to give them most trouble, as being for the most part irregular and full of disorder, so they are the least capable of being reliev'd by the Comforts of God; for as for the Spirit of Consolation, him they have long since quench'd and extinguish'd; as for the Joys of Religion, them they understand not, and are ready to smile at the mention of them; as for the testimony of Conscience, they have either no sense of any such thing, or such as is only tormenting and uneasy. Then lastly, As for meditating upon God, either he is not in all their Thoughts, or they think on him with horror and amazement, and are so far from taking any comfort in him, that they wish him out of being, as their great *Objection* that chills the Fire of their Blood, damps their Humour, and is an ever-returning Check upon their Mirth and Jollity. So then they have no part

nor lot in these Divine Comforts, tho' at the same time they want them most. This noble Remedy is no Remedy to them, the Constitution of their Mind is quite cross to it, so as to defeat all its Sovereign Power and Virtue. They must then either obstinately bear their trouble, or take up with Human Supports, seek Repose in their Thorns, roll themselves from one Vanity to another, and try to fill and satisfy their hungry Souls with variety of Emptiness, with a *multiplied nothing*.

Then Secondly, As to the Condition of damn'd Souls in the other World, it may be consider'd, that if now the whole trouble of the Soul be from the inward workings of her own Thoughts, how great will this trouble be, in how quick a current will it flow, when the Powers of the Soul shall be more awaken'd, and its thoughts more vehemently set on work, as it will be in the other state! God will then proceed to the highest actuation of the Soul, sound an Alarum to all her dormant Powers, and wind them up to the very pitch of Action; so that her whole Life shall be but one constant *stretch* of Thought. And what a Misery must it be to the Soul, to have her Thoughts so mightily set on work, and not to have a God to rest them on! To have her Faculties enlarged, and her Desires increased, and not one Divine Comfort to imploy those Faculties, or to gratifie those Desires! Never certainly will that Saying of the Wise Man be so highly verified as then, *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and*
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he that increases Knowledge, increases Sorrow. The activity of the Soul will then be her great Torment, and the multitude of her Thought will multiply her Trouble. There is nothing within the whole compass of intelligible Objects, but what she will then think upon, and she can think upon nothing but what will aggravate her Misery, every new Thought will be a new Trouble. Whether she looks within or without, backward or forward, upon Time or Eternity, upon God or the Creature, still she will have a most uncomfortable Prospect; so infinite indeed are the Thoughts that will then combine to afflict her, that I shall not offer at an account of them; only I observe, that among the multitude of her other Thoughts, the Soul will then have a true Idea, a thorough Conception far different from what she has now, or can now imagin, of the utter *Vanity* of the whole *Creation*; and to see and feel that great Prop at once fail and sink under her, and nothing more solid, substituted in its room; to find her self loosen'd and uncenter'd from the Creature, and not lodg'd upon God; to have no manner of taste or relish for false Goods, (because she now sees their *Vanity*,) and to be utterly deprived of the true, and so to lean with the full weight and stress of her desire upon nothing. What a Misery, what a Hell must this be! 'Tis what perhaps we cannot well understand now, and I pray God we never may.

In this Life the Soul has always some Prop or other to stay her self upon: If she be not so well

disposed as to delight her self in God, and relish his Divine Sweetness, then she can make a shift to solace and entertain her self with the *Creatures*; or if upon a clear thorough sight of their Vanity, she cannot find any satisfaction in such empty Enjoyments, then she can turn her self to a more substantial Good, and comfort her self in her *God*. But to have neither God nor Creature, to be destitute of both, (which is the case of a damn'd Soul) none but those who shall experiment this condition, can ever have a just Idea of it.

It is therefore the great concern, and ought to be the great care of us all, so to govern our Thoughts here, that they may not be a Torment to us hereafter; to make such a right use of our Intellectual Powers and Faculties now, that when they shall be more heighten'd and enlarged, they may have a proportionable Object to entertain them, that when we have most *Thoughts*, we may have most and best *Comforts*, even the infinite Consolations of God, which will bear the Test of Thinking, and in the multitude of our most elevated Thoughts will *eternally* delight our Souls.

A Discourse of the Natural and Moral Union of the Soul with God, and of Perfection that accrues to it from thence.

P. S A L. lxxij. 28.

It is good for me to draw near to God.

THE natural and inward Perfection of Human Nature bears so little proportion to the Capacities and Desires of the same nature, and Men are withal so inwardly conscious and sensible of this disproportion, between what they are, and what they naturally *crave* and *aspire* to, that they all with one general Consent agree (like Men in a Famine) to go out of themselves and their own Homes, to seek abroad for Provision, to strengthen their slender Interest by some Foreign Allie, and to unite themselves to some *other* Being, for the further Perfection and Supplement of their *own*.

Thus far all Men agree *to go out of themselves* for their Good and Happiness: And perhaps 'tis the only thing wherein they do so, and you will scarce ever after this be able to meet with them
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all together again ; for no sooner are they out of themselves, but they immediately *divide* and take several Paths ; and apply themselves to several Objects, as their Reason or their Sense leads them, some directing their motion towards God, and some towards the *Creature*.

Those that direct their motion towards the Creature, travel so thick and full, in such crouds and companies, that they have scarce room to pass in without elbowing and justling one another ; so that they are ready to quarrel about the *way* as well as the *end* ; while in the mean time, those that direct their motion towards God, are so very *thin* and *few*, (here and there a stragling Passenger,) that did they not travel by a good Light, and were well assured of their way, the very *singularity* of their choice would be such an Objection against it, that they would be tempted to change Roads, and be where there is most company.

But *the path of the Just*, (as the Wise Man tells us, Prov. 4. 18.) is *the shining Light*, a Path which like the *Milky Way* in the Heavens, discovers and distinguishes it self by its own brightness ; and those that travel in this bright shining Road, are *Children of Light*, of good Sense and Understanding, of great Judgment, and of great Consideration, very wise, knowing and discerning Persons. And they shew their Judgment by the Wisdom of their Choice, by the Excellency of their Aim, in that they do not propose or endeavour an Union of themselves with the
Creature,

Creature, (which would be but to joyn *Cypher* to *Cypher*, *Vanity* to *Vanity*, whence the Product would be *nothing*;) but with him who is their true and only Good, and whose Union will perfect and better their Natures. Of the number of which few Wise Persons that travel in this *shining path*, is the Psalmist here in the Text, who through all the Pomp and Glitter of a Court, could so clearly discern his true Good, that he would not go out of himself to join himself with that which is as vain as himself; but thus expresses and justifies his *better Choice*, *It is good for me to draw near unto God.*

To draw near unto God; which rendring is very much according to the *Hebrew*, and well expresses the signification of the Word קרבת in the Text. In the Septuagint it is τὸ προσκολληθῆναι τῷ Θεῷ, *to be glued fast to God.* And so the Vulgar Latin, *Bonum est mihi Deo adherere*, *It is good for me to adhere or stick close to God*; which is also follow'd by our other English Translation, *It is good for me to hold me fast by God.* But this variety of Expression, makes no material difference in the sense, which comes all to one at last, and furnishes us with one and the same matter for our Discourse and Meditation. For we have here the Psalmist's Choice, and the Reason or Justification of that Choice: The Choice implied, the Reason of it express'd. His Choice here implied, is to be nearly and closely united to God; his Reason for it is, because such an Union will be for his Good, and redound to the Happiness and Perfection of his

his Being. *It is good for me to draw near unto God.* But to make my Discourse run the more light and easie, I shall charge it with no more than what is directly and expressely contain'd in the Text, which will all resolve in this single Proposition, *that the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God.* For the better illustration of which noble and divine *Theorem*, I shall First consider the several ways of our Union with God, and Secondly, the Perfection that results from each, whereby it will evidently appear, that the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God.

And First, *Of the Union of the Soul with God.* This is either Natural or Moral : First, There is a *Natural* Union between God and the Soul, as indeed there is between God and every thing else. For if God has an infinite *Essence*, he must have also an infinite *Presence* ; he must be essentially every where, and if he be essentially present in all *Places*, then he must also be essentially present with all *Creatures*, consequently with the *Soul* of Man, which must therefore be supposed to be so intimately and immediately united to him, as to have its very Being and Subsistence in him, according to that of the Apostle, *In him we live, move, and have our being.*

God it seems is the *Foundation* as well as the *efficient cause* of our Existence ; and the Soul has her Being *in* God, as well as *from* him. As God penetrates and pervades *her*, so she dwells and subsists in *God*, who is the Place of Spirits, as Space is of Bodies. Now this must needs infer

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the most inward and immediate Union that can possibly be between two Natures : To be more nearly united, would be to be the same. If God be essentially present with the Soul, and the Soul has her Being in God, then is it not a necessary consequence that there is an immediate Union between God and the Soul ? The Apostle thought so, who proves the very same Conclusion, by the very same Argument. *He is not far*, says he, *from every one of us, for in him we Live, Move, and have our Being*, Acts 17. 27, 28. He is not far from us, signifies as much, as that he is very near us, and that we are most intimately united to him. But how does the Apostle prove this our Union with God ? Why because *in him we Live, Move, and have our Being*. 'Tis from hence that he infers our nearness to him, or our Union with him. We Live in him, therefore he is not far from us, but most immediately united with us : For he cannot be nearer to us, than for us to Live, Move, and have our Being in him.

'Tis observable, that the Apostle does not say *by him*, but *in him*, to intimate the immediateness, the inwardness of his Essential Presence and Union with the Soul ; and that this *in him*, must not be understood of the meer Power and Efficacious Influence of God (as some will have it ;) but of the very Essence and Substance of the Divine Nature, is plain from the consequence drawn from it, which otherwise would be none at all. For it would be no proof of the nearness of God to us, to say that we live in him, meaning

meaning by *in him*, only his Power and efficacious Influence in preserving us in being. Such an Argument as this would hardly have passed with the Learned *Athenians*. Besides that, had this been the Apostle's meaning, it would have been much better expressed, by saying, *by him*, than *in him*. Which Expression therefore both considering its proper natural Emphasis, and the conclusion which it is brought in to prove, can be supposed to intend no less than the *Essential* and *Substantial* Presence of God, and that we live, move and have our Being in him, not only as the *efficient cause*, but as the inward *Basis* and *Foundation* of our Life, Motion and Being, sustaining and supporting us, as *Space* is supposed to do the Bodies that exist in it: We are in God, as Bodies are in Space. God penetrates our Being, and contains us, and we dwell in him; he is our *Place*, that which contains us, that which supports us, and pervades every part of us; according to another very remarkable Expression of the same Apostle concerning God, that *he is above all, and through all, and in us all*, Eph. 4. 6. Than which nothing could have been said more expressive of God's Essential Presence to us, and of that intimate immediate Union we have with him. So then God penetrates our Essence, and we dwell in his, even as Space penetrates Bodies, and Bodies dwell in Space. And what Union can be imagin'd more close, more intimate than this? Or how can we be more nearly united to God, than for God to penetrate us, and for us

to dwell and be contained in him ! The Union which we have with Bodies, or which Bodies have with each other, is nothing to this strict Union which the Soul has with God, who indeed is more intimately united with his Creatures, than they are or can be with one another.

This is the *Natural* Union of the Soul with God ; and thus all his Creatures are united to him, as well as the Soul of Man. Bodies are thus united to him, as well as Spirits, and bad Spirits as well as good ones ; Devils as well as Angels, and the Damn'd as well as the Blessed. Nor is there any *inequality* as to this Union, which indeed is so close that it cannot be closer. The brightest Angel of Light is not thus more intimately united to God, than the blackest Spirit of Darkness ; for God can but penetrate the Substance of an Angel, and so he does that of an Evil Spirit ; and an Angel can but have his Being and Dwelling in God, and so must also an Evil Spirit be supposed to have. As *Space* is equally united to all manner of *Bodies*, so *God* is equally united to all manner of *Spirits*. The vilest piece of Dirt, and the brightest Jewel or Star are equally penetrated by Space, and equally contained in it ; and consequently equally united to it. And the same we must conceive of the purest and impurest Spirits, with relation to God, who equally penetrates and contains them all, and consequently is equally united to them all.

The sum of this matter is, All Spirits that exist, are essentially united to God, (for 'tis by
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this that they do exist, and should they be intirely disunited from him, they would cease to be,) and this Essential Union between God and them, is more intimate and immediate than any Union they can possibly have with Bodies, or with one another : And being so close and intimate as it is, it cannot but be equal in Relation to them all. For this natural Union of Spirits with God being founded upon this *Essential Omnipresence*, whereby he thoroughly penetrates and intirely contains their whole substance, it is plain that it cannot admit of more or less, but must be supposed equal in respect to all Spirits, yea, all Creatures that have any Being, which they cannot have but in God, with whom they are therefore equally united. This Natural Union with God therefore, tho' a great Benefit, Honour and Perfection, is yet no peculiar *Priviledge* of the Soul of Man, since all other Creatures partake of it with her ; her own *Body* being thus as much united to God as her self. But there is another Union with God, whereof Bodies are not at all capable, and which even Spirits partake of more or less, which brings me to consider,

Secondly, The Moral Union between God and the Soul. That Natural Tye which fastens us to God so close, that it cannot be strain'd closer. But tho' we cannot strain the *same* Knot any *harder*, yet we may bind our selves faster to God by *another Cord*, by adding to our Natural a Moral Union. Now as the other is an Union of our *Natures*, so this is an Union of our *Wills*,
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and is no other than the *Love* of God. Whatever we love, we unite our selves to, and the more we love, the more are we so united. Were it possible for Man to love nothing out of himself, he would not be in union with any thing, but perfectly loose and free, separate and independent. But since every Man is too defective *within*, to love nothing *without*, there is no Man but what is bound and chain'd fast to something or other : He that loves the World, is united to the World ; he that loves Money, is united to his Money ; and he that loves God, is united to God ; and he that loves God most, is united to him most, *He that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God*, John 4. 16. says St. *John* ; that is, is nearly united to him, and in a more especial manner made one with him : For we all *necessarily* dwell in God, as having our Being in him. This is that Natural Union which we have with God, and which all other Creatures have as well as we. That *Dwelling in God* therefore which St. *John* here speaks of, and which he makes to be the proper consequence and effect of the Love of God, must be understood of a more especial and extraordinary Union, a Union of Will and Affection, the same with this our *Moral Union* of the Soul with God.

This Union of the Soul with God, will indeed never be compleat in this World ; where, as we *know* but in part, so we *love* but in part, and so are but partially *united* to God. For we are at present united to *Creatures* as well as to God,

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and 'tis the unhappiness of most of us, to be more united to the former than to the latter. And indeed the Union we have with the Creatures is so strong, and fastened with so many Knots, that nothing can dissolve it, but what dissolves us at the same time. Nothing but what separates Soul from Body, will untye this Knot, nothing but *Death* is stronger than this *Love*. Spiritual Death or Mortification will indeed go a great way towards it, and we know a certain Person who by this Method arriv'd so far, as to be able to say, *the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*. But this is a rare instance, and must be understood too in a qualified sense; for as long as we are in the Body, we shall in some measure depend upon what has relation to the Body, and the World will still claim some sort of Kin and Alliance with us; and we shall never be able intirely to shake it off, as long as we keep our *Morality* on.

But this Union will not last always, Death that *Universal Menstruum* will dissolve it; the same fatal Stroke that cuts the Knot of Life, will cut off that Band too which ties us to the World, set us absolutely loose and free, and intirely disengage us from all the Creatures. And then if at that moment we have any true Love to God, it will perfectly unite us to him; for being quite empty of the Creatures, and having no further dependance upon them, or inclination to them, we shall then love God intirely with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind; and as our *Love* will be made

made Perfect, so will our *Union* too : We shall then be so united to God, as to have Union with nothing but him, and with him, so strictly, as not to be capable of ever being separated from him.

In the mean time, this Moral Union of the Soul with God, may arrive to a great degree in this Life, tho' it cannot be absolutely perfect and compleat but in the other. And as 'tis here attainable in great measure, so 'tis absolutely *necessary* in *some*. There is indeed a great Latitude in this Union, which admits of as many degrees, as our Love to God does, in respect of which, one Soul may be more nearly united to God than another, and the same Soul may be more nearly united to God at one time than another. But notwithstanding this indefinite variety of *increase* and *decrease* in this our Union with God, there is a degree of it that is fix'd and immoveable, and below which it can never fall ; even this *Moral* Union with God, is *necessary* in some degree, as well as the *Natural* ; and tho' all Spirits are not equally united to God in respect of this Moral Union, as they are in respect of the Natural, yet they all are in some Measure or other, and will always be.

For as there is no Spirit but what was made for the Love of God, so there is no Spirit but what does actually love him, and adhere to him in some degree or other ; even the Souls of the Damn'd, and the Devil himself, do in some measure love God, and are accordingly in some mea-

sure united to him. To love God more or less is free, but absolutely to love him, is *necessary* and unavoidable; every intelligent Creature does so, and must do so, at least *implicitly* and *confusely*, if not explicitly and distinctly. For every Spirit, even those who are in an actual state of Damnation, must love *Happiness*, (otherwise they would not be capable of being what we suppose them, that is, *Miserable*;) and all Happiness being in the truth and reality of the thing, the very same with the enjoyment of God, 'tis plain, that in loving Happiness, they have some *general glance* at God, and that he is at least the implicit and confuse Object of their Love.

'Tis most certain that every Creature that has Understanding and Will, was made for the Knowledge and for the Love of God, and know him and love him they must in some measure or other; for God cannot wholly fail of his end. They indeed may fail of theirs, in not contemplating and loving God to those degrees that they ought as reasonable Beings, and which are necessary to make them *Happy*; but there is an absolute necessity of their knowing and loving him in some degree or other, otherwise those their Powers of Understanding and Will would wholly miss the end for which they were made, and so would be in vain, and serve for nothing, which is absurd to suppose.

But besides is it possible that God should have any Love for that Spirit that has none for him? And if God should utterly cease to love him, could

could that Spirit any longer exist? Can that thing exist, which God does not at all love? Can any thing be without the Will of God? But Spirits do exist, and always shall, as being immortal. And may we not hence conclude, that God does in some measure love them, and consequently that they also do in some measure love God? since otherwise they would neither be loved by him, nor *be* at all. For there is no being out of the *Love*, any more than there is out of the *Essential Presence* of God.

Should any Spirit utterly cease to love God, he must needs in that very instant cease to be; For there is nothing lovely in the Will of that Creature, which is wholly averse from God; consequently God cannot love that Will, consequently that Will can no longer exist, (unless we can suppose any thing to exist, whose Existence God does not will,) and consequently there must be an end also of that Spirit, unless we can suppose a Rational Nature to exist without a Will, and that loves nothing; which also upon another account will be the result of this supposition. For that Spirit (could we suppose such a one,) that does not at all love God, must not love at all, or must love *nothing*; for if he loves any thing, it must be *Happiness*, and if he loves that, he does at least confusely and implicitly love God, as I remark'd before. So then every way it is absolutely necessary, that all Spirits should in some degree or other love God; and this *Moral Union* of the Soul with her Creator, is no more perfectly

fectly and intirely to be broken off or dissolv'd, than the *Natural*.

And thus far of this Two-fold Union that is between the Soul and God. I proceed now to consider the Perfection that accrues to the Soul from each.

The whole Perfection of the Soul, is either internal or external, from within or without; either that Perfection which she has in her self, from the Essentials of her Nature and Constitution, or that which she derives from her Union with some other Being. Now that Perfection which she has in her self, is so inconsiderable, if compared with her Natural Inclinations, (as was remark'd in the beginning,) that she is forced to go out of her self, and to joyn her self to some other Being more perfect than her self. That Being which we are all naturally united, is God; and he is also the Being to which we are all Morally united in some measure. And 'tis in our power to strengthen and confirm this Union by free and voluntary applications, and to make it more and more close and intire, till at last it be perfect and consummate, as I have discoursed already. But now since our natural and inward Perfection turns to so little an account, let us see what that Perfection is, which accrues to the Soul from without, which she gains by her Union with God. And First as to the Perfections that result from her Natural Union, among which I consider,

First, *Her Natural Being or Existence*. This is the First general Perfection that accrues to the Soul

Soul from her Union with God ; as she exists from him, and in him, so does she also exist by him, or by her Union with him ; for God is the inmost Support and Foundation, as well as Cause of all his Works ; the whole Creation rests upon him as upon a Center, and he bears and sustains all things by his *Essence*, as he produces all things by his *Will*. As all things that are, are united to God, so 'tis by this their Union with him, that all things are ; and tho' it be not necessary that whatever is united to God, should continue to exist, (for then it would not be in the Power of God to annihilate any thing,) yet 'tis essential to every thing that exists, to be united to God, and nothing can be intirely separated from him, without ceasing to be. The only total Separation from God, whereof a Creature is capable, is *Annihilation*.

For should a Creature exist, and not exist in God, pray what would be the Foundation of that his Existence ? Or would he want none ? That we cannot say, for if he want none, then a Creature will be able to subsist in and by it self ; and if it can bear such a *Solitude* as this, it must be from such a Perfection of his Nature as involves Independency in being, which cannot be, but in a Being who is so perfect as to have Existence essential to his Nature ; (for only a Necessary Being can be an independent Being :) Which perfection if we once grant a Creature, we shall leave nothing that will distinguish him from his God. We cannot therefore say, that a Creature

needs no Foundation for his Existence, or that he can exist in *nothing*; he must therefore exist in something. But if that something be still a Creature, there is nothing gain'd; for that Creature being supposed not to be *self-subsistent*, will still need some further Foundation. He must therefore have God for the Foundation of his Existence, and stay his Being upon the *Rock of Ages*. He must subsist by his Union with him, who subsists in and by himself, whose Essential Presence is the great necessary Preservative of whatever he has made, and who (as the Scripture tells us) *upholds all things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. 1. 3.

Secondly, *Intellectual Light*. This is another Perfection that redounds to the Soul, from her Union with God; for God is Light, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in Light: God is Truth, and he that is united to God, is also united to Truth. And how can an intelligent Being dwell in Light, without being inlightned, or be united to Truth without being instructed? God has in himself the Ideas of all things, that is, some such Perfections *in himself*; as answer to, and represent all the degrees of Being, that are *out of himself*. This would be easily demonstrable, (could I stand to do it) from the general Nature of God, who as being infinitely Perfect, must needs be supposed to include within his Essence, after an intelligible manner, all degrees of Reality, the whole possibility of Being. But besides, how else could God make the World, how could he
Create,

Create, unless he be supposed to have it himself the Ideas of all things ? For tho' the World was made out of *nothing*, yet it must be made according to *something* ; and where could that something be, but in God ? when as yet there was not any thing existing but God. The *Natural* existence of things is founded upon their *Ideal* existence ; and if things had not first existed in *Idea*, they could never have existed in *Nature* ; unless you will suppose God to have acted blindfold, and in the dark, without thinking of what he made, or considering how or for what he made it. If God made all things with Counsel and Design, if his Wisdom was then assisting to his Power, as who dare say it was not, especially, since *Wisdom* Prov. 8. her self says, that she was present at the making of the World, 'tis most certain that he must have the Ideas of all things in himself, and that he made all things according to those eternal Ideas. For there can be no design without Thinking, and there can be no Thinking without Ideas, without an immediate Object of Thought, which could be no other than the Essence of God himself, as being supposed antecedent to the existence of all Creatures, which could then have no Being but in the Divine Mind. If therefore God made all things with Counsel and Design, he must have the Ideas of all things in himself ; but if you will say that God did not make what he has made with Counsel and Design, besides the impiety and absurdity of the Supposition, I know not

not what advantage it is to the Creation to have had a *God* for its Author, since blind Chance or unaccountable Fate would have done as well. Besides, had not God an Eternal foreknowledge of all his Creatures? But how or in what could he eternally foreknow them, but in himself, and by his own eternal Ideas? For God could not foreknow them as they *were not*, but as they *were*. If than God foreknew them from all Eternity, 'tis certain that they *were* from all Eternity. But they were not thus in *Nature*, therefore they were thus in their Ideas only, and consequently 'twas not in their *Natural*, but in their *Ideal* Entities, that they were the Objects of God's Eternal Foreknowledge. God foreknew them from Eternity, as they were from Eternity, that is, not in themselves, but in his own Eternal Ideas. And so also he must be supposed to know them now, not in themselves as they are out of him, but in his own Ideas, unless you will suppose God to know his Works now since the Creation after another manner, than he did from all Eternity; unless you will suppose a *Change* in the Divine Knowledge, and such as is for the *worse* too, it being an infinitely less perfect way of Knowledge for God to know Creatures in *themselves*, than to know them in *himself*, and by his own Ideas. Upon these and several other grounds which (were it not for running in too far into the Heart of Speculation,) I could easily assign, it is a Proposition of unquestionable certainty, that God has in himself the Ideas of all things, and that

that he sees all things in those Ideas, and so is his own Light.

But now what a *Perfection* must it be for a Soul to be united to such a Being as this ! To a Being that is all things, and contains all things ! To him who possesses all the Eternal Reasons and Essences of things, with all their fix'd and immutable Habitudes and Relations, who is Essential Light, and Substantial Truth ! Can a Soul united to such a Being want Light ? Or can she doubt whether she has her Light from him ? Whence else *should* she have it ? Whence else can she have it ? Or whence else *need* she have it ? For if God has in himself the Ideas of all things, and if the Soul be united to this *Omni-form* Essence of God, 'tis plain that there is nothing wanting to the *Possible*, nay, (in some degree) to the *necessary* illumination of the Soul ; who being united to God, must also consequently be united to the Divine Ideas, which therefore not only *may*, but in some measure *must* be the *immediate Object* of her Mind ; which is all that I know of that is requisite to Intellectual Illumination. 'Tis therefore by our Union with God and his Eternal Truth, that we become Rational and Understanding Creatures, who if he either were not, or were never so little separate from us, we should fall immediately into an intellectual Stupor and silence of Spirit, and should not be able to think one Thought, or so much as to be Conscious of our very Being. For God is the true Light of all Spirits, and were this Light never so little eclips'd ;

eclips'd, an Intellectual Darkness would presently seize upon all Minds, and the Brightest Intelligences would be struck Blind. That they are not so now, is purely owing to that Union they have with the Eternal Light and Truth, which becomes the immediate Object of their Minds, their Intelligible Light, their Idea. And thus 'tis also with the Soul of Man, who partaking of the same *Union*, partakes also of the same Intellectual *Light*. As God sees all things in himself, so she sees all things in God; and 'tis by her Essential *Union* with him that she does so.

Thirdly, *The whole Pleasure and Comfort of our Being*. This is another and the most moving and ingaging of those Perfections which the Soul derives from her Union with God, Pleasure is a Perfection of the Soul, and when the Soul shall be most perfect, (as in the other state,) she shall then be in the most Pleasure. And as her greater degree of Pleasure will then proceed from the greater degree of her Union with God, so 'tis very reasonable to conclude that she has now some degrees of the same Perfection, from some degree of Union with the same Principle. God (as I have proved at large in another Discourse,) is the only true efficient cause of all our *Sensations*, and consequently of all our *Pleasure*; and 'tis by that Essential Union he has with us, that he Communicates this Perfection to us. Did not God act in and upon our Spirit, by putting it into different Modifications, it is impossible that we should have any pleasing *Sensations*; and were not

not the Soul essentially united to God, 'tis impossible that he should any way act upon it. For there is no such thing as *Action at a distance*, properly speaking either in the Operations of the Creature, or in the Operations of God. The Power of God is not of a further Extent than his Presence, (and it need not, since his Presence is Infinite.) Nor is God any where *Efficaciously*, but where he is *Substantially*; there is no such thing as a mere *Influent* Presence of God: If God were not Essentially united to the Material World, he could not communicate any *Motion* to it; and if he were not as Essentially united to the Intellectual World, the World of Spirits, he could not communicate to them either *Light* or *Pleasure*. For if God acts, he acts by his Will, and his Will is himself; and consequently he can act no where, but where he is. 'Tis therefore our Essential Union with God, which makes us capable of his acting upon our Souls, and whereby we come to have all those Sentiments of Pleasure and Joy wherewith they are at any time affected.

But besides those particular Sensations of Pleasure which are occasionally and upon some certain impressions excited in us, we cannot but find a certain general Sentiment of Pleasure that accompanies our *Being*, and which does not come and go, off and on, as our other Sensations do, but remains fix'd and permanent, and maintains one constant and uninterrupted steddiness. Tho' we have no particular occasion of Joy, or incitement

citement of Pleasure from any thing without, from any of those sensible Objects which surround us ; tho' all things about us are silent, and our own Thoughts too are no way engaged upon any Object extraordinary, yet we feel a certain Pleasure in our very *Existence*, not in our being thus or thus, in this or that state of Mind or Body, (for I abstract at present from any particular Sensation,) but absolutely and simply in our *Being*, in our being Conscious to our Selves that we *are*. This general Pleasure of *meer Being*, (for so I think it may be fitly call'd,) every Man may much better *Experiment* than I can *describe* ; and I believe there is no Man that has convers'd intimately with himself, but who is sufficiently sensible of the thing I would express.

Now this Pleasure accompanying our Beings as such, it will be necessary to suppose it inseparable from all intelligent Beings while they exist, even those who are most *unhappy*, who though they may have it so outweighed and overfet with Misery, that they were better be without it, than pay so dearly for it ; (for I cannot be of a Mind with those who will have it better to *be* tho' in extream Misery, than *not to be* ;) yet have it they must, as long as their Being lasts, tho' it be so drown'd and overwhelm'd in a contrary Sentiment, that they cannot enjoy the Sweetness of it. But now whence should this general Pleasure of *meer Being*, arise in these Miserable Beings ? Not sure from any positive and direct Act of God, as our particular Sensations do ; for it

cannot be supposed that God by any express Will or Act of his, would reward those wretched Spirits with pleasing Sensations, who deserve his severest Anger, and whom he is then *Punishing* for their Demerits. And may it not then be resolved into that Essential Union, that even such Spirits have, (for otherwise they could not be) with the Infinite and All-being God, who is so excellent an Essence, so Sovereign a Good, that there is no Being united to him, without being something the better for him, without partaking of some degree of Pleasure. So then we owe the whole Pleasure and Comfort of our Being to our Union with God, were it not for which, we should have neither *Light* nor *Warmth*; Darkness and Desolation, Privation and Sterility would be our Portion; we should feel nothing, nor know nothing, nor so much as *Be*.

And thus far of the Perfection that redounds to the Soul from her *Natural* Union with God; I shall now briefly consider that which proceeds from her *Moral* Union with the same Principle. Here I might shew, that the Love of God, (for that is what we understand here by this Moral Union,) is the truest Key of Knowledge; according to that Sublime Aphorism of a Great Man, *Amor Dei est Lux Animæ*; that it brightens the Understanding, as well as warms the Affections; Clears the Head, as well as enlarges the Heart, and gives to the Soul an open and a free view of the greatest and noblest Truths, both in Nature and in Religion. That it is the best Teacher and In-

structor

structor in *Theory*, and the best Guide and Director in *Practice*, the best Expositor of Scripture, best Resolver of Doubts, the best Distinguisher of the Will of God, the best Decider of Cases of Conscience, and the best Moderator and Composer of Disputes and Controversies in Religion; and in one Word, that as the *Fear of God is the beginning*, so the *Love of God is the Perfection and Accomplishment of Wisdom*. But this being matter of Experience more than of Notion, I shall rather apply my self to consider how the Love of God perfects the *Will* of Man, which is the proper Seat of it.

As the Love of God has an *Effective* Influence towards the Perfecting of the Understanding, so is it the immediate and *formal* Perfection of the Will. For it is the Perfection of every Power or Faculty, to be imploy'd about its proper Object, and in prosecution of its proper End. Now God is the only proper Object and End of the Will, not only because he is (as I have elsewhere shewn,) our only true Good, as being the Cause of all our Pleasure and Happiness; but also because the Will of Man was made for the Love of God, and for him only. 'Twill I suppose be readily granted me, that the Will was made to *Love*, as much as the Eye was made to *See*, or the Ear to *Hear*, this being the whole use and purpose to which it is fitted to Serve. But to Love *what*? Was it made to Love it self? But how can a Finite Being be its own end? Or was it made to love any of its Fellow-Creatures?

But

But stay, if the Will be made to love a Creature, then the same Creature that is the End of this Will, must be also the End of God too, who is supposed to make it for that End. But now can a Creature be the end of God? Can God desire or aim at any thing out of himself? Or, can God act for any thing out of himself? How then is he a Being Infinite in Perfection, and every way Self-sufficient? But suppose it were possible for God to have any End or Aim, to desire or propose any thing out of himself, yet why or to what purpose should he do it? For is not God Infinitely Wise? And must he not then love that which is most Lovely? And must he not therefore love himself more than all other things whatever, and so make himself the end of all his Actions, and consequently of his whole Creation? All things then are made *for* God, as well as *by* him, and he is the End of all his Works. If therefore the Will of Man was *made*, it was made for God; and if it was made to *Love*, it was made to love God. And indeed there is no other way of conceiving how the Will should be made for God, than by being made for the Love of God, who can no otherwise be its End, than as he is its *Object*. I conclude therefore that God is the proper End and Object of the Will, which was made only for God, and the Love of God, and is then consequently in her greatest Perfection when imployed in the Love of him that made her, and for whom she was made. The Love of God is the greatest Moral Perfection of the Soul, puts her in a right frame and posture, and enter-

tains her with the Divinest Joy and Pleasure, sets her above the Tyranny of *Concupiscence*, and all her other troublesome Passions, raises her beyond the mean Joys, and unreasonable Grievs of Life, and is the best Antidote against the Terrors of Death, conforms her Will to the Will of God, and is a stay to her in all the Revolutions of his Providence, exalts her above the insipid Entertainments of the World, and helps to support her under the Sense of its Emptiness and Vanity; in one Word, makes her fit to relish her Union with God here, and disposes her for a stricter and more *Beatifick* Union with him hereafter.

And thus have I consider'd that double Union which the Soul has with God, *Natural* and *Moral*, and those respective Perfections which result from them, and which she enjoys by Virtue of them, whereby the Truth of that great and sublime Theorem we laid down may be in some measure illustrated, *viz.* That *the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God.* Here is the *Fons boni Lucidus*, the bright and ever-shining Fountain of Good; the Well of Life, the Spring of Joy, the Water of Comfort, and the River of Pleasure, and Happy is the Soul that shall bathe her self in it: The deeper she wades in these Living Waters, the higher the Tide of her Happiness rises; for here is her whole Perfection Natural and Moral, all that she enjoys and all that she is ever capable of.

But if the whole Perfection of the Soul be in her Union with God, if it all resolves into this Point,

Point, what is it then to be *separated* from him ? And what must the condition of those Wretched Spirits be, who have no more Union with God, than what is just enough to sustain them in Being, and make them capable of subsisting under that Privation of God, which would otherwise Annihilate them ? What must be the Darkness, what the Poverty, what the Barrenness, what the Coldness, Dryness, Deadness, Emptiness, Desolation and Solitude of such a State ! *Depart from me ye Cursed !* I need not add into Everlasting Fire, for here we have *Hell* enough already. What, to be thrown off from our *Center*, to be forc'd away from the Point of our Tendency and our Rest, to be banish'd from the only Good, the Joy, the Pleasure, the Life, the Light, the Warmth, the Sun of our Souls : Eye hath not seen, neither hath Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of Man to conceive what a state of Misery and Unhappiness this must be. If the Partial and short Eclipse of the Light of this great Sun made even the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* roar out in a bitter Agony, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,* what must be the Misery, the Damnation, the Hell of that Spirit who is thoroughly and eternally *forsaken* of his God ?

It is good then for me, may every rational Soul say, *to draw near unto God* ; since my whole Perfection both Natural and Moral consists in my Union with him. It is good for me, indeed the best thing I can do, to hold me fast by my God, to unite my self to him by as many Ties and

Bands as I can, by all the Cords and Chains of Love, and by every Link of that Chain, to make this Union as close and as strong as is possible, and so to draw near to him, and fasten my self upon him by the most *Cleaving* Love, that he may reward my imperfect Union here, with a Perfect and Everlasting one hereafter. This is the true and only interest of every Rational Soul, tho' there are but few that are so rational as to be duly sensible of it, or that consider how advantageous, how necessary it is for them to draw near unto God, and to enter into a close union with him. But to those few who are sensible of the Interest and Necessity of this Union with God, and would know by what means they might be best assisted towards the effecting it, I would advise,

1. *To Retire.* The Noise, Hurry, Business, Impertinence, Folly, Sin, Vanity and Contagion of the World, do not well comport with either the Habit or the Practice of Divine Love. The Spirit of Devotion and Divine Application cannot breathe in such thick gross Air, Cant. 7. 11. *Come my Beloved, let us go forth into the Field, let us lodge in the Villages,* is the Voice and Language of the Spouse to Christ, and so it is of every Devout and Divinely affected Soul. And says God to his Church, Hos. 2. 14. *I will lead her into the Wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.* Solitude and Retirement is the proper Advantage and Opportunity of Divine Love, and of uniting our Souls with God, and of relishing and enjoying

ing that Union : The Sense of which made a
Devout Soul once break forth into this Seraphick
Rapture,

*O Solitudo Mentibus
Orantium gratissima,
O vera Cordis Suavitas,
Ignota vulgi Sensibus,
Ut te requiro & expeto
Turbam perosus improbam !
Hic, hic Serena Spiritus,
Aspirat aura Pectori.
Hic nullus auditer fremens
Tumultuantium fragor.
Hic Corda nullus inquinat
Vapor, vel umbra Criminis.
Campi Sonant hic Mellicis,
Psallentium Concentibus.
Hic Angelorum Cœtibus
Immixtus, & vindex sui
Sapiens quietam transigit
Vitam procul negotiis,
Curis procul nocentibus,
Solutus omni jurgio.
Hic alto vitans Curia
Potentioris Limina
Innoxios ducit dies
Inanis expers Ambitus.
Hic lucra Conscientia
Quadrante justo Computans
Studet Mereri Fletibus
Amissa Cœli Gaudia.*

*Optet Superba Culmina,
 Opes, domusq; Splendidas
 Quicunq; vult. Me Nescium
 Frandis juvat Silentium,
 Me Solitudo, me Quies
 Abscondat ignotum omnibus,
 Deoq; soli Cognitum.
 Hoc scire demum, hoc vivere est,
 Sibi, Deoq; vivere.*

2. *To Contemplate.* And now thou art retired, thou may'st advantageously do so, and *must* if thou wilt ever unite thy self to thy God, and kindle in thy Heart a Seraphick Flame of Devotion and Divine Love. The Will always receives its Orders from the Understanding, and we love every thing according to the view which we have of its Amiability. If therefore thou wilt raise in thy Soul a well-grounded and affectionate Love of God, place him before thee in a good Light, and take an advantageous view of him from the Elevations of Contemplation. Meditate upon him frequently and attentively, (for he will bear that severe Test,) and contemplate the infinite Perfection, the sovereign Goodness, the Transcendent Excellency, the *Centrality* of his Divine Essence; think of his Beauty, think of his Loveliness, think of his Love to thee, and whilst thou art thus *Musing, the Fire will kindle.*

3. *To Mortify.* A very harsh and ungrateful, but very necessary Method for the Love of God, and our Union with him. We must first Dye to
 our

our *Selves* and to the *World*, before we can either Love God, or Live unto him. Mortifie therefore both thy *Body* and thy *Soul*, but especially thy *Soul*; purge it first of all of *Self-Love*, which of all Dispositions of Mind is most opposite to, and inconsistent with the Love of God. Next, empty it of the *World*, and of all Love towards *Sensible* things; unburthen it of all Covetousness, Ambition, Pride, Lust, Envy and all manner of Carnal and Worldly Sentiments, cleanse it, purify it, strip it, simplify it, let nothing adhere to it that savours either of *Self*, or of the *World*; nothing that may by its interposal hinder that immediate Contract, that *Central Touch* between thee and thy God. And when once thou hast reduced thy *Soul* to this *Singleness* and *Simplicity*, thou wilt find that the least Attraction of the Divine Spirit will draw thee after it. When once one Scale of the Ballance is thus emptied of the Creature, the least weight of Divine Grace will weigh down the other. The more we draw off from our *Selves* and from the *World*, the nearer we shall draw to God; and the closer we are united to him, the nearer we shall be to our Happiness, and the more we shall be still convinc'd as we draw nearer and nearer, that *the Perfection of the Soul is her Union with God*,

To whom be all Glory.

*A Discourse of the Honour due to
Good Men, and of the great Crime
of treating them with Scorn and
Contempt.*

2 TIM. iiij. 3.

Despisers of those that are good.

NEver does an ill Man appear so truly *Contemptible*, as when he despises him that is Good and Virtuous ; and never does the Good Man appear more truly *Honourable*, than when he can patiently and meekly indure, despise, and forgive that Contempt ; which however difficult upon a Surprize, he will find both more reasonable and more easie to do, when he shall silently recollect with himself, and consider First, What an inward sufficiency and self-Contentedness there is in true Goodness, how little it *needs* that Honour and Respect which it *deserves*. Secondly, In what Credit and Estimation he is with God, and with the Saints and Angels of Light, and Wise and Good Men upon Earth, the best Judges both of Persons and Things. When he shall consider Thirdly, the great and Honourable Characters

acters and Representations which are given of him in Holy Scripture, where he is always set forth as the only Wise, Rich, Great, Powerful and Happy Man, as the only Person of true Worth and Honour. And Fourthly, The Figure that Virtue and Goodness makes in Human Writings, the best and greatest part of which are employed in drawing fair and beautiful Ideas of it, and in recommending its Practice upon the strongest Arguments of Reason and Interest. And withal Fifthly ; That these are the Result of Mens Cool, Sober and Best Thoughts, composed in Solitude and Retirement, upon the deepest Consideration and Recollection, when they are best able to think, and most sincere in the delivery of their Sentiments. And that Sixthly, Though a great many have the Impudence to make Goodness the Object of their Sport and Raillery in Common Talk, yet very few have ventured to give this their Folly under their Hands, and to let it stand upon publick Record ; so that there are it may be above a Thousand Volumes soberly and judiciously written in the Honour and Vindication of Virtue, to one *Libel* that dares appear against it. When he shall moreover consider Seventhly, the Secret Approbations and Applauses of his own Conscience continually clearing him of the Contempt that is cast upon him, and commending him for his Patience under it. Eighthly, The inward Veneration that Goodness often extorts from many of those who are the greatest Strangers to it; and seem at the greatest defiance with it. Ninthly, The

The Confessions of the most Extravagant that occasionally drop from them in their more sober intervals, when kept from Wine and Company, they have been suffered to come a little to themselves, and have had a little leisure to Reflect. And Tenthly, The more permanent and standing Declarations of Returning Sinners, the solemn Retractions of Repentance, which upon the Review and with the advantage of *Second Thought*, determines on the side of Goodness and Virtue. When he shall consider Eleventhly, That the brightest Examples of Virtue have ever been most undervalued, and met with the greatest Despite. That Twelfthly, This is one of those *Persecutions* which those that will live Godly in Christ Jesus must suffer. That Thirteenthly, The Best of Men have suffered it : And Fourteenthly, That even our Blessed Lord himself was thus treated, among whose Prophetick Characters this is one of the Chief, *He is despised and rejected of Men*, *Isa.* 53. 3. When he shall yet further consider Fifteenthly, That the Judgments and Opinions of Men make no real alteration either in the value of things, or in the condition of Persons ; and consequently the little or no hurt that Contempt does to any Body, besides him that Entertains it. And Sixteenthly, The *Glory* that Virtue casts about the Head of those who suffer this little *Martyrdom* for her sake here ; and Seventeenthly, The *Crown* that she is preparing and refining for them hereafter.

Upon these Considerations a Good Man may easily

easily raise himself so far above all that Contempt which his Goodness exposes him to, as not only to bear and forgive, but even *despise* it. But if these are too many to be presently recollected, or attended to at once, and if he would be more compendiously assisted, let him but consider from what Quiver this Arrow comes, who it is that treats him with Contempt: That 'tis a *Fools Bolt*, which indeed is *quickly shot*, but blindfold and at random, without much aim or force, with a dark Eye, and with an unsteady Hand, and accordingly with little Execution. That 'tis in short an Ill Man that despises him, (for with the Good he is in better Repute,) one whose Judgment is of no Authority, whose Representations of things are always otherwise than their Natures, and whose Good Word is the truest Defamation. One that is utterly Blind and Ignorant, as not being illuminated by the *true Light*, that lives and walks in Darkness, that understands neither God nor himself, nor his Fellow-Creatures, that has all over false Ideas of Greatness and Goodness, of Honour and Dishonour, of Shame and Glory, whose Notions and Characters of things are cross and transposed, that calls Evil Good, and Good Evil, that puts Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness, Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter, that confounds every thing, and understands nothing as he ought, the most *Mistaken* Creature in the World. This is the true Character of Wicked Men, that which the Scripture gives of them, that which their whole Conduct

duct Justifies and Confirms, and that which they themselves own and take upon them, some of them in this World, as often as they are so happy as to *Repent*, and all of them in the other World, where they shall recant and transpose their former Sentences, and with regret say, *We Fools thought his Life Madness*. Error is the true Original Cause of all the Sin and Misery that is in the World, and 'tis nothing but Ignorance and Mistake that makes Wicked Men Will and Act amiss. They are in the dark, and have not a clear view either of their *End* or of their *Way*; and 'tis that which makes them so often stumble and wander. They chuse and Practise ill, because at that instant it seems good to them, (for Evil as such is not Eligible) and therefore it seems good to them, because they are *Deceived*. They do not sufficiently attend to the Nature, Moment, Relations and Consequences of things; they do not view them in a good Light, nor it may be with good Eyes, which being imbued with the Colours of Lust and Prejudice, derive the like Tincture upon the Object; they have not their Thoughts and Considerations about them, nor do they see to the end of their Actions: And hence 'tis that they pass false Judgments, and take ill Measures; that their whole Life (like an ill composed Discourse,) runs all along upon wrong Principles and mistaken Reasonings, and is all over Fallacy and *Paralogism*; that they are nothing but Error, Darkness and Confusion; whereof they give sufficient Demonstration in all their

Discourses

Discourses and in all their Actions, but none so plain and convincing, as when they ridicule and vilifie those Persons who deserve the greatest Honour and Reverence, when they deride and blaspheme the Brightest Image, the Divinest Appearance of God in Man, and are *Despisers of those that are good.*

The Words are the worst part of an ill Character of a bad sort of Men that should rise up in the Church, or rather against it in the latter Ages of the World, when through the Degeneracy of Human Nature, Christian Piety should not only suffer a great *Decay*, and be at a low Ebb, but even fall under downright Contempt, and its Professors with it ; when Goodness should not only grow out of fashion, but into shame ; when Religion should be discountenanc'd and laugh'd off the Stage ; and when the Impudent Harden'd Transgressor, not content to walk in the *Counsel* of the Ungodly, or to stand in the *Way* of Sinners, should advance to the highest pitch of Impiety, to the very Ridge of Devilism, and take the *Chair* of the Scornful, making his Mocks at God and Religion, and throwing that Contempt upon Goodness and Good Men, which is due only to himself, and his own Wickedness and Folly.

Whether we are not now entring upon the Line of this Cloudy Interval of these latter and more degenerate days, whether the present Age be not concern'd in this black Character, I shall leave to be consider'd by those who shall observe that

that prophane Humour and Irreligious Genius that appears so visible in it, and seems to make up its very Ayr and Complexion ; while in the mean time I chuse rather to proceed to the Consideration of the Words before me, which making the Contempt of Good Men one of the Marks of a Wicked and Profligate Age, do thereby imply, that Good Men do not deserve the Contempt of Wicked Men, but rather their greatest Honour and Esteem : That nevertheless 'tis their Lot sometimes to fall under it, and that the Age is most abominably Wicked and Corrupt when they do so. So that we have here Three things to consider,

1. That Honour and Reverence which is due to Good Men.

2. That Contempt which they do really meet with.

3. The heinous Injustice and Impiety of all such Contempt.

1. We are to consider *that Honour and Reverence which is due to good Men.* Whereof that we may take a just Account, it will be necessary to lay open the true Ground and Foundation of Honour in general, which when duly stated and placed upon a right bottom, will be a Measure to direct us in our Judgment of that Honour which belongs to Good Men, to inform us whether they are truly Honourable or no, and to what degree they are so. Now I suppose that God is the only true Fountain and Original of all Honour, according to that acknowledgment

we are taught to make to him in our daily Prayers, *Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*; and that Confession of the Elders in the Revelations, who are brought in casting their Crowns down before the Throne, and saying, Rev. 4. 11. *Worthy art thou O Lord to receive Glory, Honour, and Power.* By which Expression joyn'd to that Devotional and Reverential act of theirs, in casting their Crowns before the Throne, they plainly acknowledge God to be the only true Fountain and Original of all Honour, and that it was from this great Sun of the Intellectual World that they receiv'd every Ray of their Celestial Light and Glory. And therefore it was that they cast their Crowns before the Throne; the very same Homage that every inferior Magistrate or Major of a City pays to the King, in delivering up to him his Scepter or Mace (the Insign of his Honour,) when he passes through the Corporation. And by this the King is acknowledg'd to be the only Foundation of all Civil Honour and Power, that is, the only visible one, the highest Fountain of it that rises upon Earth. But this is only in a Secondary Sense, and in a Subordinate and Derivative way. For this Fountain, has also its Fountain, and must be traced up to a higher Original, even to him by whom *Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice.*

But now if God be the true Fountain of all Honour, (which I suppose is a Principle that will readily find admittance, wherever the Notion of God does,) it will then follow that *Creatures* are

no further Honourable, than as they partake of his Excellency and Perfection ; no further than as in some measure they represent God ; even as an inferior Magistrate is no further honourable in a civil respect, than as he partakes of the Power, and represents the Person of the King. That therefore which stamps any Person with a Character of Dignity, and makes him truly honourable, must be some real Excellence or other either Inhering or Adhering, either Moral, Intellectual or Political, whereby he resembles God, or some Perfection of the Divine Nature. Thus those who are in Power or Authority, and are Honourable, as representing and partaking of the Sovereign Regality of God ; those that have great Intellectual Indowments, that are Knowing and Learned, are so far Honourable, as representing the Wisdom of God ; and so also those that are Good, (as we shall further see by and by) are Honourable, as resembling and representing the Goodness of God, the excellent and immutable Order and Regularity of the Divine Will. So much of God as appears in any Man, or in any Creature, so much as he has of what is *Divine*, so far he is truly Honourable, so far he is honour'd by God, and so far he ought to be honoured and respected by his Fellow-Creatures. And the greater that Perfection is whereby any Person resembles God, and the more he has of it, the greater will the Honour be which thence redounds to him, because he is thereby supposed to resemble God so much the more. And upon
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this Account, we shall find it further necessary to conclude, that the more this Excellency or Perfection is our own, the more Right and Property we have in it, the more its acquisition depends upon the use of our *Free Will*, still the more honourable will it render the Possessors of it, and the greater respect will be due to them, because therein they do yet more resemble God, as representing not only this or that of his particular Perfections, but also in some sort that general one of his *Aseity* or *Independency*.

These are the true Grounds of all that Honour which is Natural and Real, which is founded in Reason and Sense, and does not depend upon the arbitrary Humours and unaccountable Fancies of Unprincipled Men. It all resolves into some resemblance of God, some Participation of the Divine Nature, some Excellence or Perfection that carries a Representation of the Supreme Good, some Image or Appearance of God in Man. That Person who has any thing of this, (as all Men have in some degree or other,) is so far honourable; and he that has most of it, in whom the Glory of the Divinity does most brightly shine, in whom there is the greatest Appearance of God, he it is that is most Honourable. Whereupon *Jesus Christ* being (as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, Heb. 1. 3.) the *Brightness* of his Father's *Glory*, and the *Express Image* of his *Person*, comes to have a right to the Greatest and most Superlative Honour, and that even in respect of his Human Nature, which upon the account

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of its intimate Union with, and more Plentiful Participation of the Divine, is become more Honourable than the most Glorious Creatures. So that even the *Man* Christ Jesus is really more honourable than the most Exalted Seraphim, *being* (as the same Apostle tells us,) Ver. 4. *made so much better than the Angels, as he has by inheritance obtain'd a more excellent Name than they.*

The grounds of Honour, thus briefly open'd, we have in the same view a Discovery of that particular Right which the Good Man has to it; for 'tis very certain and undeniable, that the foregoing Measures are truly and highly applicable to him; that he has such Excellencies and Perfections of Mind, as resemble and express those of the Divine Nature; that he is in his Proportion (as the Son of God is in his,) *ἀπαύλας τῆς δόξης*, an Effulgency, an Eradiation of God's Glory, and *χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως*, a Character, an Impression of his Substance, a Living Idea and Representation of the most Perfect Being, and that there is a very Great and Eminent Appearance of God in him; which must needs give him a more than ordinary Title to Honour and Respect.

'Tis true indeed there is something of this in every Man, as being made in the Image, and after the Likeness of God; upon which account it is, that a Measure of Honour is due to every Man, according to that injunction of the Apostle, **1 Pet. 2. 17. Honour all Men.** There is it seems a certain Reverence due to Human Nature, and Man as Man is Honourable, and consequently every

every Man may justly challenge a part in our Respect and Esteem. For let a Man be otherwise never so vile and unworthy in himself, his Nature will always be good and excellent, which he will never be able so to debauch or dishonour, but that it will still bear the Image and Superscription of God, (however blotted and stain'd ;) and as long as it does so, some degrees of Reverence will be due to it.

But this Image of God which is Legible in every Man, is bright and shining in him that is Good ; like a Picture that not only retains so much of the Fundamental Draught, as to discover whom it was intended for, but whose Features are distinct and plain, the Proportion just, the Colours fresh, and the whole Ayr approaching to *Life*. The Divine Likeness does more eminently appear and shine forth with a more strong and perpendicular Ray in a Good Man, who resembles and represents God, not only as to the Essentials of his Nature, but the Order and Rectitude of it, partaking with him not only in the Spirituality of his Essence, but in that which renders him more Divine, Lovely and Adorable, the *Morality* of his *Will*. This is the brightest side of the Divine Image, and here it is that a Good Man does more particularly resemble God, as being *renew'd in the Spirit of his Mind, and having put on the New Man, which after God is Created in Righteousness and true Holiness*, Eph. 4. 23. So that he is doubly Partaker of the Divine Nature, and carries a Two-fold Representation of his

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Creator,

Creator, personates him in his *Moral* as well as *Natural* Character, and has therefore an Accumulative Title to our Reverence and Esteem, and is worthy of *Double Honour*.

Goodness is indeed the best *Patent* for Honour; and there is no Man who upon a serious and rational Estimation of things, will appear so truly Honourable as the Good Man, and that whether we respect

First, The greatness of the Perfection he is possess'd of; or

Secondly, His Right and Property in it.

First, If we respect *the greatness of the Perfection he is possessed of*. He resembles God in his best and greatest Perfection, that for which God seems most to value himself, and that for which we most admire and adore God, that is, his *Goodness*. Neither the Spirituality, nor the Immenity; nor the Wisdom, nor the Power, nor all the Attributes of God put together, represent him either so lovely or so gloriously as this single one of his Goodness, as the Moral part of his Nature. This is his Grandeur and his Glory, and that which he most glories in, and is concern'd to vindicate. *I will make all my Goodness pass before thee*, Exod. 33. 19. says he to *Moses* when he desired a view of his Glory, implying that his Goodness was really his greatest Glory. And we do not find God any where concern'd to justify his Wisdom or his Power, but we find him making a Solemn Appeal to the Sons of Men concerning his Goodness and the Morality of his Conduct,
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Hear now, says he, *O House of Israel, is not my Way equal?* Ezek. 18. 25. He seems so jealous of the Equity of his Proceedings, and so tender (as it were) of his Reputation in this Point, as to be concern'd to convince Men of it; and one main end of the Day of Judgment, is to give the World publick Satisfaction of this, which is therefore call'd *the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. 2. 5. Now this being that Perfection of God which is of greatest Excellence, and that wherein the good Man particularly resembles him, the *Court of Honour* must not take it amiss, if upon this account we conclude the Good Man more truly honourable than any of those who upon the Score of their Birth, Quality, Fortune, or any other Pretence assume that Title. All the other Sons of Honour represent some lower Perfections of God, as the Man of Knowledge and Learning represents the Wisdom of God, the Man of Quality his Greatness, the Man of Strength his Power, and the Man of Authority his Regality; but the Good Man represents the Morality of his Nature, his Goodness and Righteousness which is the Flower of his Perfections, that which brings most Honour and Glory to himself, and consequently to the Man who in this part resembles him.

This I know runs very cross to the common Measures of the World, where to be reckon'd a Man of Parts and Learning, is thought more honourable than to have the Character of Goodness and Integrity; and accordingly when we

hear the Name of a *Worthy* Man given to any one, there presently rises in our Minds an Idea of great Parts or Learning, as if that were at least the greatest, if not the only Worth ; and upon the same Principle the Name of Fool is worse resented than that of Knave ; and that which only *questions* our Sense, or Capacity, is thought more to reflect upon our Honour, than that which even Reproaches our Honesty. But all this is carried out by meer Confidence and Assurance, by Number and Vote, without Reason or Principle ; for there is more of God in the Man that is Good and Virtuous, than in him that is Knowing and Learned ; and therefore also a greater Right and Title to Honour. Not but that even in respect of real Sense and Understanding, the Good Man might stand upon a level with him, since by the wise Government of himself, and discreet Conduct of his Life, he gives the best demonstration of *Intellectual Light*, according to that of St. James, *Who is a Wise Man, and indued with Knowledge among you, let him shew it out of a good Conversation.* But to wave this Consideration at present, it may suffice to give our Good Man the Preference of Honour in his Competition with the Learned, Great, Powerful or any other ; that he resembles and represents God according to a more noble Perfection than any of them do. And thus is he more honourable in respect of the greatness of the Perfection he is possessed of. As also

Secondly, *In respect of his Right and Property*

in it. The more there is of this in any good or perfection a Man has, the more Honour will redound to him from it ; because (as was remark'd above,) he thereby comes to have a nearer Resemblance of God in respect of his *Independence*. Now if there be any Perfection which a Man has a Right and Property in, and may call his *own*, it is his Goodness and Virtue, as resulting from the free determination of his Will, the only thing either without him, or within him that he has in his Power. 'Tis true indeed a Mans Virtue is not so his own, as to exclude the *Grace* of God, to whose concurrence and cooperation all our good Habits and Performances must be principally ascribed ; but yet 'tis most certain that 'tis in several respects much more his own, than any of those other things upon which Men generally value themselves, and expect to be reverenc'd and esteem'd by others. The Goods of Fortune are wholly without a Man, and the Goods of the Body are in the worser part of him ; and the Goods of the Mind though inherent in him, and in the better part of him too, yet they are none of them so much of and from himself, so much in his own Power and Disposal as his Goodness and Virtue. Men are born to Greatness, and they inherit Nobility ; and a good Temper of the Blood and Spirits, with a happy Contexture of the Brain, makes them Witty and Ingenious ; but they are Virtuous by *Choice*, and Goodness is of their own acquiring, and depends all the way upon the free determination of their own

Wills. In which respect Good Men have a new and peculiar Title to Honour, in as much as they represent not only a greater Perfection of God, *viz.* his *Goodness*, but in a more perfect and excellent Manner, such as in some Measure expresses the *Independency* of the Divine Nature.

Indeed upon the whole matter, a good Man is the greatest *Representative* of God upon Earth; he represents the best and greatest of his Perfections, and after the most Divine way and manner. He is Possessed of the greatest Good, and he has it in some Measure from *Himself*, and may truly call it his own, it being partly owing to the good use he has made of his Natural Powers. His Body is a Living Temple of the Holy Ghost, and his Soul a reasoning Image of the whole Trinity; and both together make up a Blessed Member of Christ, and an *Habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. 2. 22. For God properly dwells in a Good Man, and a Good Man has also his Dwelling in God; according to that of St. *John*, *He that dwelleth in Charity, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. He is indeed the most Glorious Temple that the Divinity has next to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ; the Divine *Shedinah* rests upon him, and the Glory of God shines forth in him, as it did of old in the Jewish Tabernacle. And as God dwells in him, so he loves him, and delights in him, and in him only. For 'tis neither Greatness nor Wealth, Wit nor Learning, nor any thing of meer Human Extraction, that can recommend us to God, or
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make us amiable or honourable in his Eyes. These things indeed are all in all with the World, but they are of no account with him ; God regards nothing in us but his own Image, which consists in Righteousness and true Holiness, and this he can find no where upon Earth, but in a Good Man ; and there he finds it, loves it, and honours it. For the good Man follows the Will, and conforms to the Order of God, the frame of his Mind is rightly disposed, and the Strings of his Soul well in Tune ; that which is the Measure of the Divine Will, is the Rule also of his Essential Order and Justice, he wills that which is simply and absolutely best, without being sway'd by any by, private, or self-regards ; is above all little sneaking Designs or unworthy Projectings ; is indued with a Spirit of Universal Love, *seeks* the good of all Mankind, and heartily *rejoices* in the Welfare of every Creature. Men may talk of Gallantry, Bravery and Honour, and such like Romantick Worthiness, but when all's done, Goodness is the most generous and noble thing in the World ; and could we but see into the Breast of him that has it, we should need no further Argument to recommend him to our Esteem ; the very Idea of his Excellence, (like that of *Virtue* it self,) would extort from us the greatest Veneration for him : Thus it would be if the inside of a Good Man were laid open, *Si his Oculis*, &c. But as the cause now stands, 'tis easier to demonstrate that eminent Right which good Men have to Honour, than to persuade a stupid and disin-

disingenious World, that is influenc'd only by sensible Appearances, to treat them with that Reverence and Respect which they justly deserve : Which leads me to consider

2. *That Contempt which they do really meet with.* Despised and Rejected of Men, which was one of the most distinguishing Characters of the Son of God, is and always will be in some measure the Lot and Portion of all his Disciples and Followers, who must bear and carry after their Master this part of his Cross, whatever other Portion of it they have the Fortune to escape. The World was never yet so good, (and I'm afraid never will be on this side the *Millennium*,) but that Wicked Men had always by much the Majority on their side ; and they are easily tempted to despise those whom they can so easily *out-vote*, and whom they are withal resolv'd never to *imitate*. They are all inaged in an opposite Party, and have espoused a contrary cause, and so are obliged in their own Justification, to despise them to whose Order they will not be brought over, and as far as they can to render them Contemptible. The Principle upon which they act, makes it their Interest so to do, and they of all Men are the most consistent with their Principles : Whence 'tis that the Children of this World are in their Generation Wiser than the Children of Light. So that upon grounds of common Probability, a Good Man can hardly expect any other Treatment from the Hands of Ill Men than Scorn and Contempt : And accordingly 'tis what he
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generally meets with. But this being matter of Fact, can be directly proved by no other Argument than Observation and Experience, which truly is so well furnished with instances of this nature, that there needs no other. For certainly that Man must either have been a great Stranger to the World, or have been very happy in the fortune of his Company, who shall need to be told of the Contempt and Dis-respect (not to say any thing of grosser Abuses and Indignities) that the Good Man meets with abroad as his ordinary Entertainment. That his Awful Sense of God is reproached as Cowardice; that his Piety and Devotion towards him, goes for Softness; that his Conscientious Strictness, is term'd Preciseness; that his Honesty and Sincerity is from want of Parts, and because he understands not Men; that his Temperance is Unsociableness; his Quietness and Inoffensiveness, Lowness of Spirit; his Gravity, Pride and Moroseness of Humour: In a Word, that all his good Qualities are Misconstrued and Nick-named, and the Good Man himself all over Vilified and Ridiculed.

The truth is, *He and Religion* are the Two Subjects in *Reserve* for Drollery and Divertisement to most lewd Companies, the last Refuge of exhausted Humour, and of a spent Invention; when their Fancy flags, and the Vein of their Wit and Mirth runs low, when their Sleepy Spirits want a *Provocative*, and the Glass and their Jollity are both at a stand, then at a dead lift comes in Religion, or some Good Man or other,
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(and if one of the Sacred Character, so much the better,) to quicken their drooping Mirth, and to set a new edge upon their Wit; and then their Imagination teems and ferments afresh, and the Men are *awake* and *alive* again. These things are so notorious and unquestionable, that they need more to be lamented and reform'd than to be proved; and therefore I shall bestow upon this part only this further Remark, that there is one thing that mightily argues both the Reality and the Greatness of that Contempt which is usually cast upon Good Men, as being the deplorable Effect and Consequence of it, and that is, (who would ever imagin it?) *the shame of doing well*. Strange I confess it is, that Men should be ashamed of that which is the greatest Perfection of their Beings, and the true Glory of their Natures; and yet so it falls out, there is many a Man who has an excellent Temper of Spirit, very Pious Relishes of God, and whose Heart stands very well disposed to Religion; nay, he is very full of it, and would fain give it vent, and unburthen himself of it in good and pious Discourse, but he is ashamed, but he dares not, for fear of appearing Singular and out of Fashion, Odd and Ridiculous, of being thought *Guilty* of Devotion; and therefore (as one that was under the like Passion confesses of himself,) *he holds his Tongue and speaks nothing; he keeps Silence, yea, even from good Words; tho' at the same time it be Pain and Grief to him*. Now tho' this is not at all to be excused in Good Men, who by this
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their Shamefacedness and Backwardness to own and acknowledge their Character and Profession, do too much Honour and Countenance to the Censures of Ill Men ; yet this is a plain Argument of the Truth of what we are now Discouraging, a convincing sign of that general Scorn and Contempt which the profession and appearance of Goodness exposes Men to, as being the unhappy consequence of that Contempt. For why is it that Good Men are ashamed to express that *outwardly*, which *inwardly* they so much admire and approve, and to appear as Religious as indeed they are, but because of that Ignominy and Contempt which ordinarily insues upon such an Appearance ? As a Man would be ashamed to go Abroad in an Old-fashion'd Habit, though never so Rich and Good, and to his own likeing, for fear of being stared upon, and laugh'd at. And this truly is the hard case of Good Men ; the World is grown so corrupt, and Goodness has so few Friends in it, that Good Men are fain to hide and conceal the rich Attire and precious Furniture of their Minds, and to wear a *Disguise* over it, for fear if they should appear in their own Native Dress, they should draw upon them the Eyes and the Laughter of the Rabble, who would take them for *Fools* and *Anticks*. By what Reasonings and Considerations, our Good Man may be assisted to despise and overlook this absurd and unworthy Treatment, has been already suggested in the entrance of this Discourse ; it will be time now to consider

3. *The beinous Injustice and Impiety of all such Contempt.* The grounds of this are sufficiently laid already in what we have discours'd upon the First Head, concerning that Honour and Reverence which is due to Good Men. For if Good Men are really so honourable and worthy of respect, as is there represented, then it must needs follow, that 'tis a very great piece of Injustice and Impiety to despise them. It is so indeed to despise any Man, for all Men are in some measure honourable, as far as they represent him, who is the Fountain of all Honour, and no Man absolutely to be despised; and therefore says *Solomon*, *He that is void of Wisdom despises his Neighbour.* Prov. 11. 12. Whatever therefore the Witty Men of the Age may think, 'tis no great sign of Wisdom in the Judgment of him who was so great a Master of it, to despise any Man. But to despise a Good Man, one that of all Men has the best and most unquestionable Right and Title to Honour, is the most unprincipled piece of Folly, the grossest Injustice, the most Colourless and Pretenceless Impiety imaginable. There is nothing in the whole Universe truly contemptible but an Ill Man, nor he any further than as he declines from that great and fundamental measure of Honour, the Image and Resemblance of God; and so far indeed there is no one degree of Contempt but what is justly due to him. If therefore Wicked Men are for despising, if they must needs exercise their Scorn and Contempt, let it be upon *themselves*, the only despicable part of
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the Creation. But to despise Good Men, those who are worthy of the greatest Honour and Reverence, those whom God himself most honours, and in whom is the greatest Appearance of his Divinity, those who represent him in his best and noblest Perfections, who are Partakers of his Divine Nature, Members of his Son, Temples of his Spirit, and Heirs of his Eternal Kingdom ; what an Injustice, what an Impiety must this be ! God has but one particular Representative upon Earth, since the Assumption of his Son, and shall that be singled out by Wicked and Dissolute Men to be the subject of their Derision and Contempt ?

The Scripture takes notice of it as a very irreligious Symptom in *Michal*, 1 Chron. 15. 29. that she despised *David* in her Heart, when she saw him by way of Festival Solemnity, Dancing and Playing before the Ark of God ; and if in this she is supposed to have betrayed great Levity and Prophaneness of Spirit, much more would she have done so, if she had despised him, when he was engaged in an immediate act of Religion, when he was upon his Knees at Prayers, and tuning his Harp and Himself to a Devotional Hymn or Hallelujah: 'Tis great Profaneness to despise any thing that never so remotely relates to God, and carries in any degree the face of Religion ; (upon which account by the way, I think it a very unjustifiable Practice to ridicule or make a Mockery of what the most mistaken Sect of Men calls *Divine Worship* ;) but to make
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light of that wherein the Honour of God is more immediately concern'd, to undervalue pure and undefiled Religion, to mock at Righteousness and true Holiness, to ridicule that glorious *Image* and *Life* of God upon Earth, which the Angels adore in Heaven; what Impiety can be compared with this? It must be a great Affront to the Infinite Majesty of God, to despise any part of the *Natural Creation*, (there being nothing in it but what is form'd according to the Living Exemplars of the Eternal and uncreated Wisdom, who is the *Idea* of all the Creatures) but to despise the Supernatural Product of his Spirit, the Workmanship of his Grace, the most Divine Image of his Son; what an Indignity must this be to him! what an Abominable, I had almost said *Unpardonable* Offence against him! How nearly is his Majesty and Honour concern'd in it! and how severely do we think will he sit in Judgment against it in the great Day of Distinction and Recompence, when he shall be glorified in his Saints, and upon his Enemies, particularly those his bold and impudent Adversaries, who are *Despisers of them that are good*!

Behold then ye Despisers, and wonder and perish in that great and last Day of Decision, when Religion and Piety shall be publickly honoured and rewarded, and the Righteous shall stand in great Boldness before the Face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of him or his Labours. And when the Wicked repenting and groaning for Anguish of Spirit, shall say
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within themselves, this was he whom we had sometimes in Derision, and a Proverb of Reproach : We Fools accounted his Life Madness, and his End to be without Honour. But how is he number'd among the Children of God, and his Lot is among the Saints ! The Scene is now strangely alter'd, and the state of things revers'd and turned upside down. Virtue that was before despised, is now the only thing in Credit and Honour, and that dares lift up its Head ; and Vice that was before applauded, flatter'd and courted and feared, now sneaks and trembles, and inherits Eternal Shame and Confusion. Consider this, ye that forget God, and despise his Worship, and those that serve him, and that are so dear to him, and turn your Contempt into Honour and Esteem ; for how meanly soever you may think of Good Men, God in the mean while has another notion of them ; and know this, that you cannot think so meanly of them, as God thinks of you, and as you will one Day think of your selves. In the mean time consider what your Judge says, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven,* Mat. 18. 10.

The Result then of the whole is this, that we endeavour to judge of things, not according to Popular Measures, but according to true and just Ideas, and render to Good Men that Honour and Reverence which is due to that glorious Image of God which shines in them, and have a care of

treating any Man with Scorn and Contempt, lest it should happen to light upon a Good Man; but most of all how we despise them whom we know to be Good: Whom we ought to Love, Reverence and Esteem, and for whom we ought to Praise and Glorify God, to whom be Glory henceforth and for ever. *Amen.*

*A Discourse of the several ways
whereby God Addresses himself to
Man.*

PROV. viij. 1, 4, 5.

*Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth
her voice?*

*Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the
sons of men.*

*O ye simple, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be
ye of an understanding heart.*

WHEN a Man shall seriously consider and compare the vastly different States of the two Worlds, the *Natural* and the *Moral*, how regular and full of Order the *Natural* is, where the Laws of Motion are not more excellent and perfect than the Execution of them is punctual and exact; where Bodies of all manner of Sizes, Figures

Figures and Contextures move not only regularly and orderly, so as to contribute to the Beauty and Perfection of the Universe, but also with the greatest Uniformity and Agreement imaginable, the Communication of Motion being always the same in the like Accidents and Rencounters of Bodies all the World over; I say, when a Man shall consider this, and at the same time shall reflect upon the State of the *Moral* World, how all over irregular and disorderly this is, how corrupt the Wills and Practices of Men are, how little the sacred Rules of Morality are observ'd, which are yet as necessary to the well being of Society, as the Laws of Motion are to the Order of Nature. And withal how various and disuniform this irregular Motion of Human Will is, every Man almost setting up for himself, and directing his Course a several way, acting upon a different Principle, and for a different End, so that there seems to be scarce any other Agreement in their Motions but the *common Disorder* of them; such a Consideration as this would almost tempt one to think, that either these two Worlds had not one and the same Author, or at least that he was a very partial and unequal Parent, that he set a greater Value upon the Natural than upon the Moral World, and had more regard for the Orderly Motion of *Bodies*, than for the Regular Love of *Spirits*.

Thus indeed a Man would be tempted to imagine, that should only consider the different States of these two Worlds in themselves, without pro-

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ceeding to enquire into God's Dispensations towards them, and how far he has interest'd himself in the Conduct and Regulation of their respective Motions. But by that time this is well look'd into and consider'd, there will appear sufficient reason for the laying down that Prejudice which upon the other Consideration he took up, sufficient to convince him that God is not such a partial and unequal Parent as at first he was apt to imagin, but that he is no less concern'd for the Order of the *Moral* World, than for that of the *Natural*, and has taken as much care (as far as the Capacity of the Subject would allow) for the Regulation of the former, as for that of the latter. That he has applied himself to both in a Measure proportionable to their Natures, and has been assistant to them as far as they were capable; That he has made all provision imaginable both for the Discovery of his Will, and for enforcing Conformity to it, and that there has been nothing wanting on God's part towards the most perfect Regulation of the *Moral* World, notwithstanding that great and general Disorder it is now under. For, *Does not Wisdom cry? And Understanding put forth her Voice? Unto you, O Men, I call, my Voice is to the Sons of Men. O ye Simple, understand Wisdom, and ye Fools be of an understanding Heart.*

The Words are already divided, and stand in a posture fit for Discourse; for in the first Verse we have a solemn Declaration or Admonition of the Divine *Wisdom*, the Eternal and Substantial Wisdom

Wisdom of God, *Doth not Wisdom cry ? And Understanding put forth her Voice ?* In the second we have the Persons to whom this Admonition is directed : *Unto you, O Men, I call, my Voice is to the Sons of Men.* In the third Verse we have the Matter of this solemn Admonition : *O ye Simple, understand Wisdom, and ye Fools, be ye of an understanding Heart.* These are the Parts into which the Words are naturally laid out ; but not loving to clog my Discourse with unnecessary Divisions, I shall cast the two first into one, and so shall consider

1. An Admonition or Address of the Eternal Wisdom to the World, or to Mankind.
2. The Matter of this Address.
3. The great Concern that lies upon the World to attend to and comply with this Divine Address.

The first thing we have here to consider is, an Admonition or Address of the Eternal Wisdom to the World. I say of the *Eternal Wisdom*, for that no other can be meant by (Wisdom) in this place, than the substantial and essential Wisdom of God, the Divine $\alpha\omega\Omega$, the second Person of the Trinity, who is the true intelligible World, and in whom is both the *Life* and the *Light* of all Spirits, must needs appear so unquestionably evident to any one that shall but glance over the Coherence of this Chapter, that I may well be allow'd to take it for granted, and proceed upon it as a *Supposition*. This Eternal and uncreated Wisdom who is the great Luminary of the whole Intel-

lectual World, the Wisdom of his Father, and the Light of Men, by whom, as the Author to the *Hebrews* tells us, God made the Worlds, and by whom he upholds and sustains all things. This same Eternal Wisdom I say being in process of time to be made Flesh, and to take upon him human Nature, has all along upon the prospect as it were of that near Alliance he was to contract with us, shewn a particular regard for the Children of Men, and applied himself to them in a various manner for their Discipline and Instruction throughout the several Ages of the World. And indeed who so proper for this Office, as he who was in the Eternal *System* of the Divine Counsel to be the Repairer and Restorer of Human Nature, the Reconciler and Mediator between God and Man, and the great Teacher and Prophet of the World, and who withal was to be the King and Head of the Church, and the Judge of Man and Angels, in whose Hands the whole Administration of Providence is lodged, and by whom God now *governs* as at first he *made* all things. Who so fit to admonish and inform the World as he by whom it was first made, and afterwards repair'd, and upon whose Shoulders (as the Prophet tell us, *Isa.* 9. 6.) the Government of it is to rest.

For 'tis to be consider'd, that this Address of Wisdom to the World is one Instance or Part of *Divine Providence*, of that paternal Care and Concern which God has for the Works of his Hands; which is seen partly in prescribing Laws
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of Motion to the material World, and in executing those Laws ; partly in ordering and disposing the Events of the Moral World, in governing and controuling the Wills, Counsels, and Actions of Men, in setting Bounds to their Wick- edness, saying, *Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further*, in bringing Good out of Evil, and the like : And partly in giving Laws and Rules of Action for the Conduct and Regulation of human Life, and in admonishing and stirring up the Hearts and Wills of Men to a due Conformity with those Laws. In speaking and making appli- cation to the rational World, both by telling Men what is their Duty, and by admonishing them to do it ; by pointing out to them the Path of Life and Happiness, and by quickening and putting them forward to walk in it. These two last are the principal and most excellent Parts of Divine Providence, it being a thing of more difficulty to govern a *Rational* than a *Material* World, and withal of greater Consequence that it should be govern'd. And the last of all is the most prin- cipal of the latter two, it being of greater Con- sequence yet, that the Rational World should be govern'd as to its *Actions* as relate to a future State, upon which an Eternity depends, than as to its *Events* and Occurrences which concern only the present Political State of things. And ac- cordingly the Eternal Wisdom of God, by whom the World is govern'd, and the great Wheel of Providence turn'd round, has all along, and does still make this his particular Concern, to address

his Voice to the Sons of Men, to teach and direct, to admonish and exhort them in the ways of Righteousness and Peace, that so they may live *well* here, and *happily* for ever.

Various are the Ways and Manners whereby God speaks and addressees himself to Man, as I shall endeavour to represent in the process of this Discourse; but in the mean time we may here pause a while and reflect how different the Method is which God uses towards the *Rational*, from that which he uses towards the *Material* World. In the Material World God has not only fix'd and prescrib'd certain Laws of Motion, according to which the Course of Nature shall proceed, but is himself the sole and immediate Executor of those Laws. For the Matter being a dead thoughtless thing, that has not *Power* so much as to move it self, much less to move it self regularly and in a way of Order, nor Capacity to understand or take notice of any external Rules or Laws of Motion that should be prescrib'd to it, it would not have been sufficient for God to have establish'd Laws of Motion, though never so perfect, unless he had also undertaken the Execution of those Laws which he has set himself in the Government of Nature. I say *set himself*; for to speak properly, God does not prescribe Laws of Motion to *Matter* (for to what purpose should he give a Law to that which cannot understand any) but to *himself* in the Government of Matter. 'Tis to himself that he has set these Laws, and 'tis by himself too that they are executed.

cuted. God does here both prescribe and execute at once ; for 'tis he alone that produces and regulates all the Motions of Matter, which of it self is so far from being able to move regularly, that it cannot move at all.

Thus God deals with the World of *Bodies*, but thus he does not deal with the World of *Spirits*. He does not here himself execute the Laws of *Love*, as he does there himself execute the Laws of *Motion*. As he immediately produces, so he immediately regulates the Motion of Bodies ; but he contents himself to prescribe Laws, to make Rational Applications, to *speak* to Spirits. He speaks to them, because they are *Rational*, and can understand what he says, and he does *but* speak to them because they are *free*. God does not use any Violence towards them, or lay any Constraint upon them ; he will be loved with a Love of Choice and with a Love of Reason, with a Love worthy of him, and with a Love worthy of them. For God always treats with his Creatures in a way that is proportionate to their Natures, and accordingly having denied the Power of Thinking to Bodies, he himself thinks for them, and with his own immediate Hand conducts and orders all their Motions ; but having indued Spirits with Understanding and Will, made them rational and free Agents, he treats with them in a rational way, by laying down to them Laws and Precepts, and by setting before them rational Motives and Inducements

ments to Obedience. And this is the Method he uses towards Man, to whom as a rational Creature he addresses himself in a rational way, setting before him Good and Evil, Life and Death, both his Duty and the Consequence of doing or not doing it. And tho', as being a Creature of a compounded Nature, the Laws of Motion are immediately and forceably executed upon one part of him, his *Body*, yet God does not thus execute the Laws of Love upon his Spiritual part; no, he deals with that after another manner; here *Wisdom* cries, and *Understanding* forth her *Voice*, he makes rational Applications and Addresses to this part, he *speaks* to the Soul.

This he does several Ways, and in several Manners, and by several Instruments. Man has not more Capacities and Possibilities of receiving the Addresses of God, than God has Ways of addressing himself to him. He speaks to him sleeping, and he speaks to him waking; he speaks to him in Company, and he speaks to him in Solitude; he speaks to his Senses, and he speaks to his Understanding; he speaks to him by Commands, and Promises, by Threatnings, by Exhortations, by Admonitions, by Reproofs; nay, (so low is he pleas'd to descend in his Treaty with us) even by Expostulations, and Beseechings, *Why will ye dye?* He is so concern'd to speed in his Address, that he becomes a Suppliant to his Creature, and courts the Workmanship of his Hands. He speaks to him *within*, and he speaks to him *without*: *Within* by the Dictates of Reason,

son, by the Light of inward Truth, and by the secret Whispers of his Spirit : *Without*, by the visible Frame and Order of the Creation, wherein not only the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shews his Handy-Work, but even the meanest Insect reads him a Lecture of Divinity, and Preaches to him a Sermon of Adoration and Devotion. By the various Dispensations of Providence, by all the Events and Accidents that happen in the World, by his Judgments and by his Mercies, by his Smiles and by his Frowns, by Prosperity and by Adversity, by the good Examples of good Men, and by the Punishments of bad Men, by the Histories of former times, and by the present Transactions of his own, by the Relations of others, and by his own Experiences, by the ordinary Revolutions of Nature, and by the extraordinary Appearances, by the Growth of Perfection, and Decay of natural Bodies, and by the several Stages and Periods of his own, by Hunger and Thirst, by Sickness and Death, by the Bills of Mortality, and by the Pomp of Funerals, by Graves and Monuments, Epitaphs and Escutcheons, and by *the Mourners that go about the Streets*, by every Clock that he hears strike, by every Bell that he hears ring, by the good Counsels and Admonitions of Friends, by the reading of good Books, and by the hearing of good Sermons, but chiefly by the express Revelation of his Divine Will in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament : By *Moses* and by the Prophets, by Christ
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and by his Apostles, by the Law and by the Gospel.

This last is the most evident and remarkable way of God's speaking and addressing himself to Mankind. Here it is that *Wisdom* does most properly and emphatically cry, and *Understanding* put forth her Voice. For here the Eternal and Substantial Wisdom that is our true intelligible Light, that enlightens every Man that comes into the World in the secret Recess of his Reason, in Condescension to Man who is now wholly become sensible and carnal, puts on Flesh, and makes himself as it were a *sensible Light*, instructing us and addressing himself to us after a sensible manner, by Miracles, by wholsom Discourses, by Parables, by familiar Similitudes and Comparisons, and by the most prevailing and effectual Sermon of a bright and shining Example. And indeed the Incarnation and Revelation of the Son of God with the whole Course of his Life and Doctrine, and his mysterious Undertaking for us in that amazing and astonishing Work of our Redemption by his own Death and Passion, is such a loud Call, such an awakening Alarm, such a mighty, such a powerful, and withal such a standing Address from God to the World, that one would think it should not fail of having some very considerable Influence upon it, but should produce a great and wonderful Change in the Lives and Manners of Men. For as hereby God does most convincingly and sensibly assure us that he loves the *Man*, so he does
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with no less evidence ascertain us, by what he has laid upon his own Son, that he will not spare the impenitent *Sinner*; who therefore having no Benefit by the Redemption of Christ, must necessarily have the whole weight of God's Displeasure fall upon him, and receive the full stroke of his Justice, if no Mediator had interpos'd. Only his Condition will in one respect be much worse than so, as having neglected such a dear and wonderful Capacity, and Possibility of Salvation, and (in the Phrase of the Author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 10. 29.) trodden under Foot the Son of God, and counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and done in despite of the Spirit of Grace. Which Words tho' more immediately relating to Revolters and Apostates from the Christian Faith, do yet truly concern, and are very applicable to all *impenient Christians* who neglect to close with those easie terms of Salvation which are offer'd them in the Gospel of Christ. These do truly tread under Foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and do great despite to the Spirit of Grace. Upon which Consideration, as we cannot but wonder that the Gospel has no better effect, so we cannot but conclude that Christianity will be a very sore *Judgment* to those to whom it does not prove a *Mercy*; and that of all the sorts of Men in the World, none will have such a terrible Account to make at the last Day, as *ill-living Christians*.

And thus have I run through the more visible
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and ordinary ways whereby God addresses himself to Mankind ; which because they lie more open and exposed to view, I content my self only to point out as I go along. But there are yet other very considerable ways of God's speaking and applying himself to Man, which because less observ'd and consider'd, do the more need to be spoken to, and to be more particularly insisted upon. I therefore further consider that God speaketh and addresses himself to Man.

1. *By the natural and necessary Order and Connexion of things.* I do here first of all suppose (what constant experience Witnesses, and what I presume no Man will deny,) that there is a Connexion between some certain Actions, and some certain Consequences ; that some Actions are attended with good Consequences, and some with bad ones, that some do tend to the Happiness, and some to the Unhappiness of Man, both as to his Private, and as to his Publick Capacity. I suppose again Secondly, that this Connexion is not Positive and Arbitrary, but Natural and Necessary, that it is founded upon the Nature and Constitution of things, upon the Systeme of the Natural and Moral World, that is (to express my self more clearly,) that the World being constituted as it is, and the Nature and Condition of Man in it, being so qualify'd and Circumstantiated as it is, it is the natural and necessary Result of such a *Complex Constitution* of things, that some certain Actions should make for the well-being, and some for the ill-being of Man. I suppose therefore that

that Human Actions do operate *Physically*, and in a way of Natural Casualty, and that Happiness or Misery are the natural and proper Effects of them; and that considering the present System of things, some *Actions* do as naturally tend to the order or disorder of the Moral World, as some *Motions* do to the order or disorder of the Natural World. This is the great and only Bottom of Morality, and that which lays a Ground for all the *Natural* Distinction that is between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, those Actions being called Good which are naturally productive of Good, and those Evil which are as naturally productive of Evil: By which account of Good and Evil, it is supposed both that there is such a Connexion between such Actions and such Consequences; and withal that this Connexion is Natural and Necessary, being founded upon the Nature and Constitution of things. Now tho' this be a sufficient Reason why we should do some Actions and avoid others, because of the good or bad Consequences that do naturally attend them, yet hitherto God is not supposed to *speak* to us; nor is the Practice or Omission of these Actions supposed as yet to be bound upon us as a *Law* by any Declaration of his Will. They are indeed in themselves highly reasonable to be done or avoided, in regard of their respective Consequences, and so very fit and apt to be made the Matter and Subject of a Law; but as yet that which is requisite to make them so is wanting, God not being as yet supposed

posed to have made any Declaration of his Will concerning them. But one step further will open to us a Prospect of that too ; for whereas God is the Author of the Nature and Constitution of things, he must also be supposed to be the Author of all that Connexion which is founded upon it, and results from it. If upon such a Constitution of Nature, there arises a Connexion between such Actions and such Consequences, then supposing God to be the Author of that *Constitution*, he will be also the Author of that *Connexion*. As, if upon such a stringing and tuning of a *Lute*, such a Motion of the Hand upon it, will be attended with Harmony ; then supposing that 'tis I who have so strung and set the Lute, 'tis I also that am the Author of that Connexion that is between such Motions upon it, and the Harmonicalness of its sound. I therefore suppose Thirdly, That God (as being the Author of Nature,) is also the Author of that Connexion that results from it between some Actions, and that Good or Evil which follows upon them ; and which must therefore now no longer be consider'd as meer *Natural Consequences*, but as a kind of *Rewards* and *Punishments* annex'd to them by the Supream Law-giver, and consequently that such and such Actions be done or omitted, is now no longer a bare Practical Proposition or Rational Dictate, (as Mr. *Hobbs* will have it) but strictly and properly a *Law*, God having sufficiently declared by these Rewards and Punishments, as by a *Natural*

tural Sanction, that 'tis his Will and Pleasure that those Actions which are attended with good Consequences, should be done, and that those which are attended with evil Consequences should be avoided. Not as if I thought (with some) that the Law had its Obligation from the *Sanction*, but that these Natural Sanctions are Signs and Declarations of the Will of God, who by them speaks to the World, as a Law-giver, what he will have done, and what he will have left undone. And he does also

2. *By sensible Pleasure and Pain* : A thing which every Body feels, but few pass any serious Reflection upon ; tho' to him that will consider, it will presently appear, that it reads us a very profitable Lecture, and that there is a *Voice of God* in it. For does not God by the frequent and daily return of these Impressions, continually put us in mind of the Nature and of the Capacity of our Souls ; that we are Thinking Beings, and Beings capable of Happiness and Misery, which because we actually feel in several Degrees, and in several kinds, we may justly think our selves capable of in more, tho' how far, or in what variety, it be past our Comprehension exactly to define. Indeed at present we are conscious to our selves but of Five different kinds of pleasing or painful Sensations (God having for the present thought convenient to awaken no more than what are necessary to the use and conduct of this Bodily Life,) but what *dormant Senses* we have within us, how many Sensations

we are capable of, and to what Degree our Pleasure or our Pain may be heighten'd, when God shall proceed to draw out all the Powers, open all the *Stops*, and awaken the now silent Capacities of the Soul; who can tell or imagin? In the mean while by those which God has already awaken'd, he gives us a little Specimen of what further Happiness or Misery we are capable, and by that warns and admonishes us, that one of these two Sensations will be our Lot hereafter; and consequently what manner of Persons we ought to be, in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, with what care and exactness it concerns us to demean our selves in this short Probation, that we may not be miserable, but happy in that State which is *all Happiness* or *all Misery*.

Had a Man never felt such a thing as *Pleasure* or *Pain*, he would not only have been ignorant of the Two greatest Capacities of his Nature, but would have had no Handle in him for God to have taken hold of him by. It would have been to no purpose for God to have given him a Revelation concerning Heaven and Hell; for he could not then have any Notion of any such thing, and so would not have believed it; or at least he would have had but such a faint, languid and confuse Sense of it, as would have stood him in little or no stead towards the Order and Government of his Life. But now having already tasted of these *Two Cups*, having within himself this early Pledge, this Earnest, this Anticipation of Happiness and Misery; he looks
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upon Heaven and Hell as possible Ideas, and so stands disposed to admit of a Revelation concerning these Two States, whereof he has already some Image within himself, and whereof God does not fail to put him constantly in mind by every Pleasure which he enjoys, and by every Pain which he suffers.

And whereas we do often want that Pleasure which we naturally Love, and feel that Pain which we naturally Hate, we are hereby given to understand, that we are not to our selves the Authors of our own Sensations, (for if so, we should never be in Pain, and never without Pleasure,) but are altogether *Passive* in the Sentiments, and receive them from another Hand, and at anothers Pleasure, that we are wholly subject to the Power and Will of some Superior Being, who acts in and upon our Souls, and affects us with Pleasure and Pain, and so deserves to be the Object of our Love and of our Fear, as having the Power to make us happy or miserable. And if that Superiour Being be no other than God himself, (as I have plainly demonstrated in another Discourse,) then it follows that *God* speaks and addresses himself to us in every Sensation of Pleasure or Pain which he raises in us, thereby continually admonishing us in the most sensible and palpable manner of our intire Subjection to him, and utter Dependance upon him; that we are in his Hands as Clay in the Hands of the Potter, to be moulded and fashion'd as he pleases, to receive what *Modification* of Soul he shall think

fit, whether of Pleasure or of Pain ; that he has the most absolute Power over us, whereby he is able to make us either Happy or Miserable, and consequently that he only ought to be loved, and he only to be feared by us. And thus God speaks to Man by what seems most Natural to him, and is most Ordinary with him, sensible Pleasure and Pain. As he does also

3. *By that inward Joy and Consolation which attends the Good, and by that inward Trouble and Uneasiness that attends the bad state of the Soul.* The thing here supposed, is matter of common and universal Experience ; there is no Man but who is or may be sensible, that when the Moral State of his Soul is out of order, when either he leads an ill course of Life, or when his Heart does not stand rightly disposed for God and Goodness, he feels a certain inward Pain and Trouble in his Spirit, and is restless and uneasie within himself, more or less, according to the degree of the Disorder, and the greater or lesser tenderness and sensibility of his Conscience. This state of Mind which every Sinner feels, the Psalmist has most emphatically described in the account that he gives of himself during the Moral Indisposition of his Soul. *Psal. 38. Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presses me sore. There is no soundness in my Flesh because of thine Anger, neither is there any rest in my Bones because of my Sin. For mine Iniquities are gone over mine Head, as an heavy Burthen they are too heavy for me. My Wounds stink and are corrupt because of*

my Foolishness. I am troubled, I am bow'd down greatly, I go mourning all the day long. For my Loins are fill'd with a loathsome Disease, and there is no soundness in my Flesh. I am feeble and sore broken, I have roar'd by reason of the disquietness of my Heart. One would be ready to think by this dismal Description, that he that made it, had then laboured under some strange Bodily Disease, Hurt or Pain; but 'tis very certain that the words are Metaphorical, and under the Figure of a sore, broken and wounded Body, represent that Pain and Anguish of Spirit the Prophet was then under, and which every Soul in its Proportion feels, that is out of the way and order of God. According to that noted Saying of St. Austin, *Ita est, & sic jussisti Domine, ut Pœna sibi sit omnis inordinatus Animus.* So it is, and so thou hast commanded O Lord, that every inordinate Mind should be a Punishment to it self.

And so likewise on the contrary, when a Man's Soul is rightly affected, and in a true Moral Frame and Temper; when he has done a good Action, or spent a Day well in Works of Devotion or Charity, he feels an inward Joy and Complacency of Spirit, something like the Pleasure of Health, when the Body is well in Tune, (for indeed Holiness is the Health of the Soul,) with a secret Whisper of Applause and Approbation within himself; he finds a Cheerful Day of Light and Warmth breaking in upon his Soul, and a certain Balmy Sweetness distilling upon all his Thoughts.

But now whence is this Pleasure and this Pain that attends the good and bad state of the Soul? Is it not from God? Yes it is. He (as I have elsewhere shewn,) is the true and sole Cause of all our Sensations, and is alone able to make us Happy or Miserable. 'Tis he therefore that raises this Pleasure and this Pain in us, and that thus differently Rewards or Punishes the Souls of Men, as they are well or ill affected towards him: 'Tis he that diffuses this Bitterness through those Souls that have erred and strayed from him and his ways, thereby admonishing them that they are in an undue and unnatural state, and in a wrong way that will never lead them to himself, their true Good; and that therefore they should make haste to get out of it. And 'tis the same He that pours out the Oyl of Joy and Gladness upon Good and Virtuously disposed Souls, thereby admonishing them that they are in his Order, in a state and way that he likes and approves of, and that will not fail to bring them to himself, and that therefore they should go on and persevere in this Orderly Course. This I take to be both a true Account, and the Natural Construction of this Pleasure and this Pain which attends the Good or the Evil Disposition of the Soul. They are both raised in her by God, and that to no other end, but to admonish her of her Duty and Interest, that she may know when she conforms to his Order, and when she deviates from it. And thus the great God out of his infinite Love, and tender Regard for his Creatures, is pleased to act the

the part of a *Guardian Angel General*, to do the Office of a *Private Monitor* to every particular Man, by Smiling upon him, and Comforting him when he does well, and by Frowning upon him, and Checking him when he does ill, that so he may have both a *Mark to discern*, and an *Incon-
agement to do his Duty*.

These are the several ways whereby *Wisdom* tries, and *Understanding* puts forth her Voice. Thus God speaks and addresses himself to Man. But how does Man Hear? Why he turns the Deaf-Ear, and refuses the Voice of the Divine Charmer, Charm he never so wisely. He sets at nought all his Counsels, and will have none of his Reproofs; Prov. 1. 25. as *Wisdom* her self complains in the First Chapter of her Divine Sentences. The loud Clamour of the Senses, the Tumult and Hurry of the Passions, the Noise and Buz of the World, and the Cares and Troubles of this Busie Life, conspire together to drown both the still Whispers, and the louder Calls of God, and do so fill and ingage our narrow Capacities, that nothing else can be distinctly heard but what relates to the good of the Body, and the Animal part of Man. But there is a time coming on, when God will be heard, and that before the Awakening Trump of the Arch-Angel, when Sicknes shall have brought down the swelling Tide of the Blood and Spirits, and thereby laid the Fury and Tempest of Nature; when the Stream of Vital Oyl shall run low, and the great Wheel of Life turn gently round; when all

is still and quiet in the Man, then will God speak to *Adam* in the Cool of the Day, in the Calm and Silence of his Passions, and will then be sure to be heard by him. In the mean time, if Man will not be persuaded to lend his Ear upon the account of the Greatness and Majesty of him that speaks, yet at least let him hearken and attend for the moment and importance of the thing spoken. Which naturally leads me to the next Stage of my Discourse, namely to consider

2. *The Matter of this Address from God to Man.*

We have had a view of the several ways whereby God speaks and makes continual Application to the World, and in them, of his Fatherly Care and Concern for the Happiness and well-being of his Creatures, whom he would not thus importunately Visit and Solicit, were he not truly desirous of their present and future Good. And that he is so, the *Matter* of this Divine Address will serve to convince us, as well as the various ways and manners whereby he makes it. But what is that? What is it that God speaks to Men? It must be something worthy of him, and worthy of them; something fit for a God to communicate, and something fit for a World of Rational Beings to hear. When Wisdom cries, and Understanding puts forth her Voice; when God comes down with a Message to Men, we may justly expect some very weighty and important Matter, something answerable to the Quality of so great a Speaker, and something that is of Moment and Consequence for Men to know and be inform'd.

inform'd of. But what is it that he speaks to them? Does he tell them *תבין עמו*, the deep things of God? Does he open and uncover to them his own Divine Essence, or the great Mysteries of the Trinity, the Eternal Generation of the Son? Or the Procession of the Holy Ghost? Does he declare to them the notion of Eternity and Infinity, or acquaint them with the Order and Hierarchy of the Angels? Does he unfold to them the Secrets of Nature, or the Intricacies of Providence? Does he inform them about the order and manner of the Divine Decrees, and of their Consistence with Human Liberty? Does he give them an account why the Christian Religion was no sooner reveal'd, or why the Law was no sooner given, or why the World it self was no sooner made? Does he tell them how the Soul now lives in the Body, or how it shall live hereafter without it, or whether it had any Being before she came into it? In one Word, does he undertake to satisfy their Curiosity about Nice and Subtile Questions, about dark Problems, and matters of high Notion and Theory, whether *Metaphysical* or *Mathematical*? One is apt to fancy and expect that he should; and did God set the same value upon such things that Men do, no doubt but he would. But he well knew that these things to the Comprehension of which our present Capacities are not very well suited, and which the Condition of this present Life does not mightily want, and which are of no great Service for the future; he knew that our Eyes were too weak

weak to bear much Light, and our Heads too shallow to hold much Theory ; and that a little would but serve to puff us up. He knew that our Faculties were too narrow to comprehend such great Discoveries, and that an imperfect glimpse of them would but fill us with Vanity. In short, that the Knowledge of these things (to use the Words of the Psalmist,) was too wonderful and excellent for us, that we cannot attain unto it, and withal that it would not signify much to our Happiness, if we could. And therefore considering the present incapacity of Man for these things, and the little necessity of these things to Man, God has not thought fit to reveal these things to us, or to make them matter of his great Address to the World.

It would have been very easie for the Eternal Wisdom of God, who was at the making of the World, (*for when he prepared the Heavens, I was there*, Prov. 8. 27. says she,) and by whom the Apostle tells us the Worlds were made, Heb. 1. 2. and who therefore could best unfold the Mysteries of the Creation ; I say it would have been very easie, and (if ever) very seasonable for this Eternal Wisdom when she came down from Heaven to be Cloathed with Flesh, and to live and converse among Men, to have brought down with her a System of Nature, and to have taught Men the Secrets of Philosophy. It would have been an easie matter for Jesus Christ, in whom it pleased the Father all Fullness should dwell, and *in whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge,*

Knowledge, Col. 2. 3. during the time of his Abode upon Earth, to have instructed the World in Natural as well as Divine Knowledge, to have taught Men Arts and Sciences, as well as Morality and Religion, and to have set up a *School*, as well as a *Church*. But to the contrary, it is very remarkable, that during our Saviour's whole stay upon Earth, and in all that various Conversation which he had with the Inhabitants of it, he never drop'd one Word concerning these things, never open'd his Divine Lips concerning any matter, but what related to Morality and good Life, and would reveal no Mysteries to us but that great one of *Godliness*.

Our Saviour had once a very fair Opportunity, (I had almost said a Temptation,) to satisfy the Curiosity of the World, in the great Theory of the *Præ-existence* of Human Souls, when that Question was put to him by his Disciples concerning the Blind Man, *Master, who did sin, this Man or his Parents, that he was born blind?* Joh. 9. 2. The Question supposes the Man in a capacity of Sinning before his coming into this State, therefore in actual Being, and consequently proceeds upon the Supposition of *Præ-existence*, which was also the generally receiv'd Opinion of the *Jews* at that time, as well as a very Venerable and much Celebrated Doctrin in the *Gentile Philosophy*. Here therefore one would have expected that our Saviour having so fair an occasion offer'd him, should have taken the *Chair*, and have given the Inquisitive World a clear determination
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concerning this great Question ; but so far was he from this, that he utterly declines the Controversie, by so contriving his Answer, that neither one nor the other part of the Contradiction might be concluded from it ; *Neither has this Man sinned*, says he, *nor his Parents*, but that *the Works of God should be made manifest in him*. Wherein the only thing decided is, that 'twas neither upon the account of the Man's nor his Parent's Sin that he was born Blind ; but whether his Soul did præ-exist before its Union with this Body or no, (which was both the Supposition and the main drift of the Question,) this he wholly declines, and passes over with Silence, as indeed he does all Matters of meer Notion and Speculation.

For indeed it would not have suited with the Character of our Saviour's Person, nor with the end of his Appearance in the World, to set up for a Broacher of Notions and Theories, and erect a Society of *Virtuoso's* ; the grand Design of his Incarnation being to restore the Ruins of Human Nature, to reestablish that Order which Sin had overturn'd, to satisfy the Divine Justice for the Sin of Man, and to redeem him from the Power as well as from the Guilt of it ; to purify our Hearts, and to sanctify our Natures, and thereby to make us *meet partakers* of that Inheritance with the Saints in Lights, which he had purchased for us, and not to fill our Heads with Curiosities, or to feed our Mouths again with the unhappy Fruits of the Tree of Knowledge.

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'Tis indeed very true, that Christian Morality is highly useful to the Perfection of the *Understanding*, as well as to the Conversion of the *Heart*; that when all is done, the Love of God is the best Light of the Soul, and Purity of Heart and Life, the best *Key of Knowledge*, even Human and Natural, as well as Spiritual and Divine; and that we cannot arrive to a Philosophical Brightness and Clarity of Mind, and to a right discernment of things, by any better or more compendious way, than by following the Precepts and Instructions of Christ, and by conforming our selves to the Order of his Gospel. And in this respect, he may be said to lead us to the Knowledge of *Natural* things, and to open to us the Recesses of *Learning* and *Science*. But this is only indirectly and accidentally, by reason of the transcendent Excellency and Perfection of the Gospel of Christ, and the universality of its influence, whereby it extends it self to every thing that any way contributes to the Perfection of the Mind, as being a Remedy proportion'd to all its Defects, and a Medicine directly oppos'd to the Cause of all its Disorder. And all manner of Ignorance being in its measure some defect and disorder of the Soul, it was necessary that so Perfect a Dispensation as the Gospel of Christ should have a proper tendency to the removal of it. But yet however it was no part of the principal, nor of the profest Design of Christ, to instruct the World in *Speculative Truths*; tho' being to deliver to Mankind

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kind a Systeme of Precepts that was proper for the reparation of Human Nature, it was fit he should accommodate them to all its Defects, and that they should have a tendency, indirectly at least, to procure us all the Perfection we are capable of.

This Notion is well taken notice of, and well expressed by the Excellent Author of *Conversations Chretiennes*, Pag. 204. *Il est necessaire de suivre les Conseils de Jesus Christ, pour acquerir cette Perfection de L'esprit, qui consiste dans la Connoissance de la Verite. Cependant Jesus Christ n'est pas venu pour faire de nous des Philosophes; Ses Conseils ne tendent qu'indirectement & à cause de leur Universalite, a nous rendre Scavans.* It is necessary to follow the Counsels of Jesus Christ, that we may acquire that Perfection of Mind which consists in the Knowledge of Truth. Nevertheless Jesus Christ came not to make us Philosophers, his Counsels tend only Indirectly, and by reason of their Universality to make us Learned.

And the same excellent Person suggests to us a little after, a very good Reason why our Saviour Christ was not to instruct us in Natural and Human Learning. *Nois demeurerons eternellement tels que nous serons dans le Moment que notre ame quittera notre Corps, &c.* We shall eternally remain such, as we shall be in the Moment that our Soul shall leave our Body. If we love God in this Moment, we shall love him always; for the motion of Spirits is only unconstant and meritorious for this Life. But all Human Sciences are in themselves

unprofitable to regulate this Moment upon which depends our Eternity : They merit us not the Assistances of Heaven for this Moment ; they incline not our Hearts towards God. So Jesus Christ was not to guide us directly to this Perfection of the Mind which is barren for Eternity, and ceases at the Moment of Death. He was to recommend to us a Privation from sensible Good, to the end that our Hearts may be fill'd with his Love, being empty of every thing else ; and that adhering to nothing in the Moment that commences Eternity, our Love may carry us towards God, who is the Source of all Happiness.

This Consideration of this Excellent Person more distinctly unfolded, resolves into this Order of Reasoning. He First of all supposes, that the Eternal state of Man, is the only state of Man that is considerable, or that deserves to be regarded by God. Secondly, He supposes, that this Eternal state of Man depends upon the Disposition the Soul shall be in at the very Moment of her Separation from the Body. Thirdly, He supposes that Human Sciences, have little or no tendency to put the Soul in a right Disposition for that Critical Moment. Whence in the last place he infers, That to instruct Men in Human Sciences, was not a thing worthy of our Saviours Care, as being altogether Calculated for this Life, and having little or no relation to Eternity, the only considerable state of Man. This is the Substance of this Author's reasoning, which (like every thing of his,) is so Solid and Consequential, that
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it loses nothing by being cast into a more Logical View.

But to return to the thing before us ; the great design of God in all his Applications to Mankind, particularly in that signal Address of his to the World by his Son, was to reduce us to our true Good, to refix us in our Principle, to reunite us to himself, and so to secure our Eternal State, the only interest of Man that deserves to be regarded or provided for. And therefore since Human Sciences contribute little or nothing to the Promotion of these Ends, it was altogether beside the Design of God to make any particular Discovery or Revelation of them to us, and accordingly he has not.

Not as if the Knowledge of these things were no *accomplishment* of the Soul, or that God *envies* us any Perfection. Neither of these ought to be supposed. All Truth in some measure perfects the Understanding, and God is willing we should have all the Perfection whereof our Natures are capable : But he would not have our present narrow Faculties divided and distracted in the prosecution of our greatest Good, or to be hinder'd by less concerning Occupations, from attending upon what is of far greater Consequence.

I say of far greater Consequence, and that not only in respect of the proper value of the things themselves, but also as to the *Opportunity* of their attainment : For now is the only opportunity of securing a happy Eternity ; but now is not the only opportunity of securing the Know-
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ledge of Human Sciences. Whatever is done in order to a happy Eternity, must be done now, there is no other Season for it; but as to Speculation and Science, we may attain to that *Hereafter*, and certainly shall, if the other part be but secured. If God can but once bring us and unite us to himself, he thereby secures our whole Interest; for in uniting us to himself, he unites us to all *Good*, and consequently to all *Truth*, which will include the Perfection of our Understandings as well as of our Wills, and serve to make us *Knowing* as well as *Happy*.

The great thing therefore that God has to take care of in reference to Man, is to bring and unite him to himself, to secure his Eternal state, as that which is every way his greatest Interest, and which draws after it the whole. And therefore when he addresses himself to us, it is not worthy of his Wisdom (which sets a true value upon things) to take notice of any thing but what directly leads to this great End; and therefore not of Human Arts and Sciences, which at the most can contribute to it but remotely and indirectly; but only of those *Moral Qualifications* of Mind, and those Duties of *Practical Life* which are Naturally, and therefore indispensably necessary to make us capable of Happiness, and to put us in a fit Disposition and Order for Eternity. These are the only things that Man is concerned to know, and therefore these are the only things that God has thought proper to reveal to him, or to treat with him about; which by the way may

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be sufficient Satisfaction to those Pert Forward Wits, who take this as an occasion of disparaging, and thinking meanly of Scripture, because it does not instruct the World in Arts and Sciences, or hold out to us a System of Philosophy.

But, to make another *By-Reflection*, does not this give us a Measure as to our own Conduct, as well as justify the Measure that God has taken? May we not hence collect what is the great Concern, and what ought to be the great Business of Man in this World? For may we not argue backward as well as forward? And will not the Argument hold both ways? We have shewn that the things relating to Moral Life and Practice, are the only things God has revealed, because they are the only things that are necessary for Man to know; and will it not as well follow that they are the only things necessary for Man to know, because they are the only things which God has Reveal'd? The Argument indeed is less Artificial, because it is taken from *Authority*, but it is nevertheless concluding, because that Authority is Divine and Infallible. The infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God oblige us to think, that he has Reveal'd whatever is necessary for Man to know; and therefore since the things relating to Life and Manners are the only things that God has reveal'd, we have hence a safe Warrant to conclude that these are the only things necessary for Man to know. And if these are the only things necessary for Man to know, then are not these also the only things necessary for Man to study and imploy his Thoughts

Thoughts about ? And will not this severely condemn the Conduct of those (upon whom the World bestows the Character of *Great Men*,) who lay out their Time and their Thoughts upon such Studies as signify little or nothing, to the *Moralizing* of their Minds, and the disposing their Souls for Eternal Happiness, the only End that can justify any of our Studies, or any of our Undertakings ? Yes it will ; but I need not pursue this Remark any further, having professedly discours'd it in a particular Treatise.

*Reflect. on the
Conduct of Hu-
man Life.*

We have then here before us the true *Subject Matter* of this great Address from God to Man, which you see is no other than the things which relate to this Moral Conduct, to the regulation of his Life, and Manners, as being the only *Means* that have an immediate Connexion with his Great *End*. These are the Matters which God treats with us about, which he opens and sets before us, and continually inculcates to us, as being of the greatest concernment both to be *known* and *practised*. These are the things concerning which *Wisdom* cries, and *Understanding* puts forth her Voice, when she calls and directs her Voice to the Sons of Men. And so the Scripture represents it. *He hath shewn thee O Man what is good ; Micah 6. not what is Notional or Speculative, but what is good. And so again, unto Man he said, behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, that is Understanding, Job. 28.* And the Eternal Wisdom of God says of her

her self, that she dwells with Prudence, which denotes that Knowledge of Man which is *Practical*, and consists in proposing a right end, and in prosecuting it by fit and proper means. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*, Prov. 8. 12. But we need go no further than the last Clause of our Text, which most expressly makes this to be the Matter of the Divine Address to the World, *O ye Simple understand Wisdom, and ye Fools be ye of an Understanding Heart*. Where 'tis observable, that not the *Head*, but the *Heart* is here made the Seat and Subject of Understanding; which plainly shews it to be meant not of Notional or Speculative, but only of Practical Wisdom, that Wisdom which (as St. James observes, *Jam. 3. 13.*) shews it self in a good Life and Conversation.

And indeed when all's done, a Good Life is the best Proof of a Good Understanding, and a Pure Heart the most satisfying Argument of a Clear Head. For a Man that will act regularly, must think rightly, and carry his Thoughts about him too. He must have a true Idea of things, and of their Relations and Proportions to each other; he must know what is his Good, and what is his Evil; what is his true Interest, and what the most proper means to secure it. He must know himself and all the Capacities and Relations in which he stands, both towards God and his Fellow Creatures, and all the Duties that result from those Relations, and the several Reasons, Arguments and Motives of those Duties: He must know how to distinguish between Truth and Probability,

Probability, between Shadow and Substance, between Reality and Appearance: He must be a Perfect Master of *Proportion*, and thoroughly comprehend the Art of *Measuring at a Distance*, which is harder in Morality than in Geometry. He must understand how to value a Futurity, and to take the just *Height* of a *Reversion*, that so he may rate things according to their true moment, and not be so far imposed upon in his Choice, as to prefer the Pleasures of this short Life before a Happy Eternity, because of that advantagious Ground upon which they stand, the Recommendation of being *Present*. All this he must know, and all this he must consider. I say *consider*, for he must have a good *Presence* of *Mind* with him, as well as Exactness of Judgment, and not be actually ignorant of what he habitually knows; for then he will act as absurdly, as if he had not known it. For 'tis all one, as to the purpose of Well-living, not to have right Notices and Apprehensions of things, or not to have an actual view and sense of them. He must therefore *Consider* as well as *Understand*, and have his Thoughts about him, as well as in him: He must not only walk with a good Light, but must bear it always before him, and have it continually shining in his Eyes, that so he may not make a false Step for want of having his Light present. In one Word, he must have a right Judgment in all things, and an actual view of what he knows. If he be not thus qualified, I do not see how he can Live and Act well;

and if he be, I do not see what is wanting to make and denominate him truly *Wise*.

The truth is, there is not such a mighty difference between Speculative and Practical Wisdom, that he that has the latter should be suspected of wanting the former : For my part I can apprehend no other difference but this, that the latter adds to the former the advantage of *Consideration*. If he that is Speculatively Wise, did but joyn Consideration to his Notion, he would quickly become Practically so ; if he did but duly weigh the Truths that he knows, and attend to their Consequences, if he were always awake, and had his Eyes always open, if he had his Knowledge actually before him, that is, if he did *Consider*, (for Consideration is nothing else but actual Knowledge,) he could not chuse but act regularly, and in Conformity to his Light. For 'tis while the Understanding takes a nod, and the Light of the Mind is eclips'd, that the Will starts aside and goes astray, all Sin being the result of Ignorance, of one sort or other, either *Actual* or *Habitual*. So that the Practically Wise Man is all that the Speculatively Wise Man is, and something more, as having not only a right Apprehension of things, but an Actual View of what he knows. And tho' he that has a good Understanding is not always a good Man, yet he that is a Good Man, must be a Man of good Understanding. According to that of the Psalmist, *A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments*, Psal. III. 10.

And indeed they are the only Persons that truly

truly deserve that Character: And accordingly 'tis observable that Holy Scripture (which represents things always according to their true Ideas, and in a true Light) never makes mention of *Wisdom* with any Mark of Commendation or Excellence, but it always means by it, either the actual Practice of our Duty, and the leading a good Life, or at furthest the Study and Knowledge of those Truths which have a direct Tendency to it, and carry an immediate Connexion with it.

The Gentlemen of the *Parr Royal* deliver themselves so well upon this *Moral Essays* occasion, that 'tis worth while to Vol. 2. P. 311. hear what they say. *The Holy Scripture only calls that Science, which teaches us how to Live, accounting all that are ignorant of it Fools and Mad Men. Nor would Man, were he Rational, Speak any other Language than this. For it is most conformable to Reason and Nature, and 'tis only his Blindness that has brought another Dialect into Fashion.* This is very truly and very judiciously remark'd, and may serve to satisfy us why God does here represent the practice of a Good Life, (which he makes the Matter of his Address to Man,) under the Title and Appellation of *Wisdom* and *Understanding*. O ye Simple understand *Wisdom*, and ye Fools be ye of an understanding Heart. Wherein he also acts the Rhetorician, recommending the Matter of his Address under the perswasive insinuation of *Wisdom*, a thing we all desire and pretend to, that so it might have a more advantageous

tagious *Hearing*, and gain the greater acceptance in the World ; which leads me to consider

3. *The great Concern that lies upon the World to attend to, and comply with this Divine Address :* Which I shall dispatch in a very few Words, out of Reverence to the Subject of my Discourse, being willing to suppose that an Address from God may be sufficient to make its own way into the Hearts of Men, without the Assistance of any Human Recommendation. And certainly, if ever Man be concern'd to Hear and be Attentive, it is now ; and that whether we consider the Majesty of the *Speaker*, or the Moment of the Address.

First, the Majesty of the Speaker, who it seems is no other than the Eternal and Essential Wisdom of God. And shall Man be *Deaf* when God speaks ? When then will he hear, and to whose Voice will he give his Attention ? If the Great God can condescend to address himself to a Creature, sure one would think that Creature might well afford to hearken to the Application of his God. We hearken to the Voice of our Fellow-Creatures continually, and reckon it as a necessary Civility to do so ; and shall we not all shew the same regard to our common Creator ? God hears us, when we address our selves to him, and shall not we hear him when he addresses himself to us ? Shall we, can we be *Deaf* to such a Speaker ? When Wisdom cries, and Understanding puts forth her Voice, shall we then refuse to Hear ? Or (which is worse,) shall we hear, and despise, forget and neglect to do ? Certainly we do not con-

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sider the Quality of him that speaks to us, if we can be thus listless and regardless of what he says. As we do neither

Secondly, The moment of the Address it self ; which is concerning the greatest, perhaps the only Interest we have at stake. For 'tis not God's own suit that he thus earnestly solicits with us, neither is it for his own advantage that he makes these continual Applications to us. But it is our Interest and our Concern that he espouses ; and as 'tis *to* us that he speaks, so 'tis *for* us, and for our Good, and the greatest Good too that we are capable of. That which he courts us to, and importunes us for, is that we would be *Happy*, and that we would take such a *Course* as will make us so ; That we would live and act wisely and like our selves, that is, like rational Creatures, according to the Order of our Being, and the Perfection of our Nature. That we would fit and dispose our selves for the Happiness he has prepared for us, bring our selves within the compass of his Love and Mercy, and so demean our selves for this short time, that he may reward us with a Blessed Eternity. This is the thing which God treats with us about, this is the burthen of all his Applications. He that first spake us into Being, would fain now spake us into the Order and Perfection of Being, into Happiness. And is not such an Address as this most worthy of our Attention and Compliance, meerly upon the account of its own Moment, tho' it came from some *inferiour* Being, and had no recommendation from the
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the Divinity of the Speaker? Much more then, since it comes to us from *above*; from the very Eternal and Substantial *Wisdom* of God, who tho' too Great to gain by our Happiness, is yet too good to see us Miserable.

See then that ye refuse not him that speaketh; Heb. 12. for 'tis not a light thing to reject such an Address from such a *Speaker*. But if we should be so stupid and disingenuous, *Wisdom* her self has forewarn'd us what we must trust to, and what return we must expect. *Because I have call'd and ye refused, I have stretch'd out my hand and no Man regarded. But ye have set at naught my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof, I also will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh, Prov. i. 24.*

There is a time coming on, when we shall be very willing that God should hear us, and that is at the *Hour of Death*; and there will be a time when we must and shall hear him, namely, in the *Day of Judgment*, when he shall sit in the Court of his Justice, and give final Sentence upon us. And therefore as we would have God readily to hear us at the *Hour of our Death*, and as we would comfortably hear him in the *Day of his Judgment*, so it concerns us to hear him now in this his *Day of Address and Treaty* with us, while he bespeaks us by all the variety of Application, while *Wisdom* cries, and while *Understanding* puts forth her Voice.

Let us all then seriously consider and comply with this Divine Address, and let this be the re-
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turn of every Soul, *Speak Lord for thy Servant heareth.* Amen.

POSTSCRIPT *to the First Discourse.*

FOR a further Justification of the Measures laid down concerning the Love of God in our Account of that First and Great Commandment which enjoyns it, I shall now offer another Consideration taken from the *Will* of God, and our Obligation of being conformable with it. I beg leave here to *suppose* that the Will of God is the Measure of all *Good*, as the Understanding of God is the Measure of all *Truth*. Not as if I thought either the Understanding or the Will of God to be (as is the Opinion of some) in such a Sense the Measure of Truth or Good, that what God conceives as True, should be therefore True because he so conceives it, or that what he wills, should be therefore Good because he wills it, which would be a Supposition of very mischievous Consequence as well in respect of Morality and Religion, as of Science and Speculation. But only that as the Understanding of God is so exact and infallible, that he can form no Judgment but what is according to Truth, so the Will of God is also so orderly and regular (as following the Conduct of an unerring Light,) that he can will nothing but what is Good. And that therefore as we can safely argue *a Posteriori*, that such a Proposition is true, because God so conceives.

so we may in like manner argue from the Will of God, that such a thing is Good, because he wills it. In this Sense I suppose we may warrantably say, that *whatever God wills is Good*; not as if it were therefore Good because he wills it, but because such is his Perfection that he can will nothing but what is so *antecedently* in its own Nature. So that the Will of God may and must be admitted as a just Standard and Measure, tho' not as the *Cause* of all Good.

But now if the Will of God be the Standard and Measure of all Good, as the Understanding of God is the Measure of all Truth, then 'twill follow, that it is as much the Perfection of our Will to be conformable to the Will of God, as 'tis the Perfection of our Understanding to be conformable to the Understanding of God; that the former does perfect the Soul as much in a *Moral* way, as the latter does in an *Intellectual* way; and that therefore if we would sincerely consult the Perfection of our Rational Nature, we should at least as much endeavour to conform our Wills to the Will of God, as to conform our Understandings to the Understanding of God; to will as God wills, as to think or conceive as God thinks or conceives. For if Good be as perfective of the Will, as Truth is of the Understanding, then the Perfection of the Will must as much consist in Conformity with that which is the Measure of Good (whatever it be) as the Perfection of the Understanding does consist in its Conformity with the Measure of Truth. And
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since this Measure of Good is acknowledged to be no other than the Supream Will, the Will of God, it is evident that Conformity with his Will must be as much the Perfection of our Will, as Conformity with his Understanding is the Perfection of our Understanding. Whence it will follow, that as our Understandings cannot vary, tho' never so little from the Divine Understanding without falling into *Error*, so our Wills cannot decline, tho' never so little from the Divine Will, without falling into *Sin*. As all Deviation from the Understanding of God is an *Intellectual*, so all Deviation from the Will of God will be a *Moral* Disorder. We ought therefore to be thoroughly Conformable with this great and universal Standard of Morality, to tune our Wills to a perfect *Unison* with the Will of God, and in every respect to will the same that he Wills, if we would be exact Followers of Order, and contain our Souls within the strict Bounds of what is just and fit. And there is a time coming when we shall do so, when *Self* shall be quite extinguish'd in us, when we shall maintain no private or particular Motions, but shall follow the Order and Motion of God, and be carried along as it were with this great *Vortex*, having our Wills intirely resolv'd into the Divine, without so much as the least *Velleity* left of our own, that so the Will of God, as God himself, may be *All in All*.

This Conformity of the Human Will with the Divine, is a Subject much handled and inculcated in the Writings of the *Mystics*, and the Jesuit
Drexelius

Drexelius has written a very useful Book upon it. And indeed those sort of Men are generally very happy in *Devotional Compositions*, and particularly upon the present Subject, of conforming our Wills to the Divine, which they treat of in a very favourable and affectionate way, only I think they have here generally this Fault, that they look upon it as a *particular* Virtue, and represent it a little too much after the manner of *Counsel*, as something Heroically Excellent, as the Top and Height of Christian Perfection; whereas indeed it is a Virtue of the most General and Transcendental Nature, such as comprizes within its Latitude *the whole Duty*, and nothing but the Duty of *Man*. *Idem velle quod vult Deus*, is the Sum and Abridgment of all Morality, and ought to be as a *Motto* inscribed upon every Soul, as including neither less nor more than what is the strict and necessary Duty of every Intelligent Creature. As an intire Conformity of our Will with the Will of God, involves the whole Moral Perfection of Man, so Disconformity from the Will of God, is commensurate to the whole compass of Sin; and there cannot be the least Disconformity of our Will from this Measure without Disorder. If we think otherwise than God thinks, we err or think amiss; and if we will otherwise than God wills, we sin or will amiss, since we do then as much recede from the Supreme Measure of Good, as in the other Case we do from the Supreme Measure of Truth. It is therefore not only Matter of Counsel and Perfection,

fection, but our strict and necessary Duty to follow the Order of God, and to have our Wills infinitely Conformable, and as it were *Perpendicular* to his.

Well, if so, then we ought to love what God loves, and nothing but what God loves, and to love that with all *our* Capacity which God loves with all his. This is clear at Sight. But now 'tis most certain that God loves himself, because he is truly Lovely; and therefore we ought also to love God. And 'tis as certain that God loves himself infinitely, because he is infinitely Lovely. And therefore we ought to love God with our Infinite, that is, with our whole Love, and to our utmost. For 'tis nothing but utter Impossibility, nothing but an Essential Incapacity, nothing but our being *Creatures*, that can excuse us from loving God in a degree of Love strictly infinite, there being no other truly worthy of God. But since we cannot do that, we should detain no part or degree of what is finite, but love God with our whole Love, as he loves himself with every degree of his own Love.

'Tis also most certain that God as being an infinitely Perfect and Self-sufficient Being, can love nothing but himself, as Love is (here) taken for *Wishing* or *Desiring*. God can desire nothing but what is Good and Desirable, and there being not the least Degree of Good or Desirable, but what is contained in himself, in his own infinite Nature, 'tis impossible that he should desire any thing out of himself. All Desire of any thing *without*,
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proceeds from some Want or Defect *within* ; and accordingly all Beings that are under such a Defect, (which is the case of all Creatures,) are also *Essentially* subjected to desire. If therefore God desires any thing out of, or besides himself, 'tis because of some Essential Defect, because he has not all that is Desirable in himself. But God (as his Idea imports,) is a Being absolutely Perfect, and every way Self-sufficient ; he contains all the degrees of Being, and consequently all that is Good or Desirable within himself, and therefore 'tis impossible that any thing without himself should be the Object of his Desire. We may conclude therefore, that as God loves himself, and loves himself Infinitely, with the whole and full application of his Love, so he loves himself withal so intirely, as to love nothing besides, nothing out of himself.

Whence we are further led to conclude, that as this is God's Measure of loving himself, so this also ought to be our Measure of loving God : For if our Wills ought to be conformable throughout with the Will of God, and God loves nothing but himself, then 'tis plain that we ought to love nothing but God, or to express it in the Language of the Text, that if God loves himself with his whole Heart, Soul and Mind, with the united and collected Strength and Energy of the whole Trinity, then we also ought with our whole Heart, Soul and Mind to love God ; whom since we cannot love *Infinitely*, we should at least love *Intirely*.



